INTERNATIONAL EDITION

THE RAKE

THE MODERN VOICE OF CLASSIC PERFECTION

ETHAN HAWKE

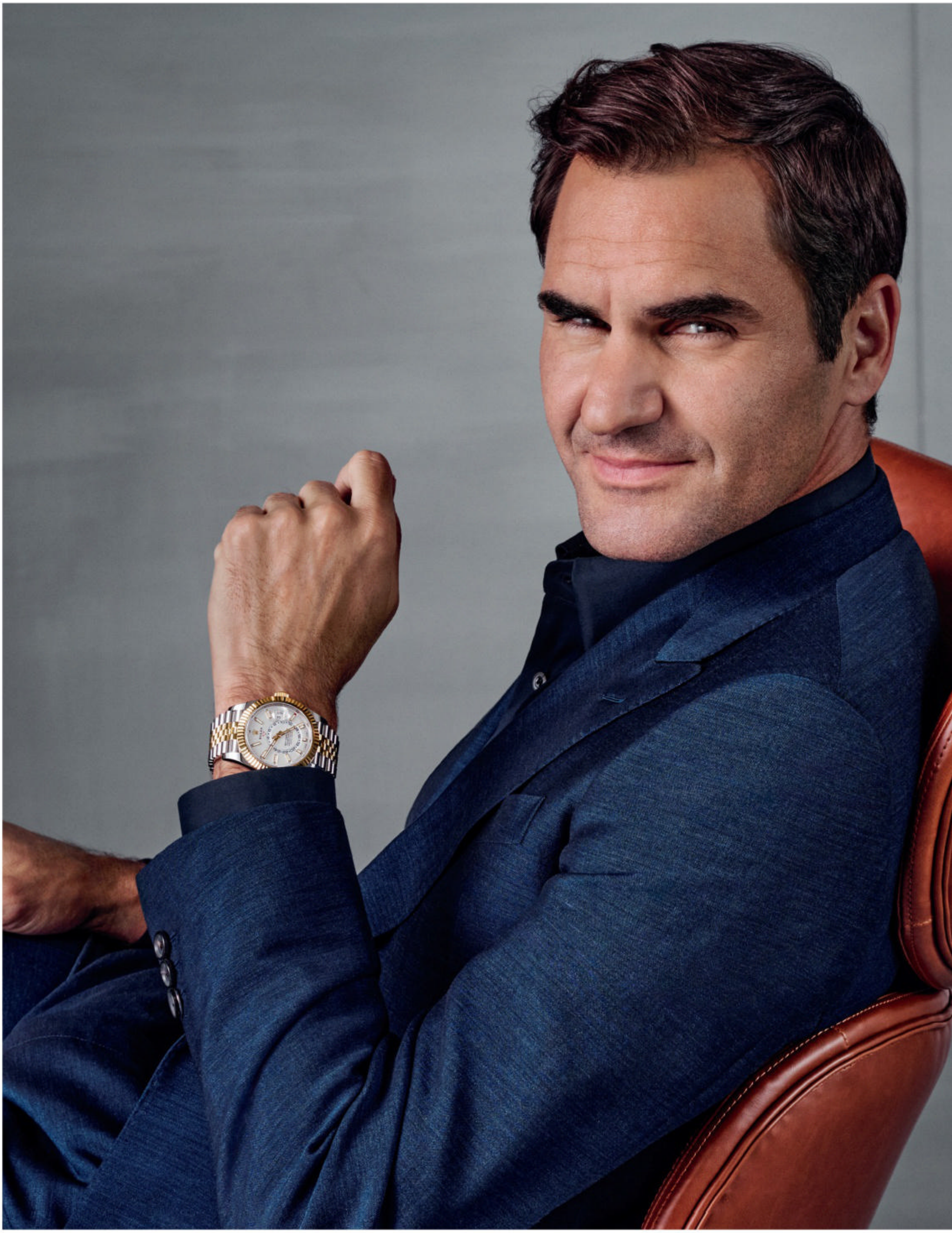
Seizing the day

QUEEN ELIZABETH'S
JUBILEE DEDICATION

SLIM AARONS FOLLOWS
THE JET SET TO ACAPULCO

MRS RAKES: LADY AMELIA
& LADY ELIZA SPENCER

Plus
MATTHEW MODINE
NEW & LINGWOOD
VILEBREQUIN x WOOLMARK



WHO'S COUNTING?

With Roger Federer, numbers alone are somewhat dizzying. 20 Grand Slam® titles, 103 ATP titles, 310 weeks as World No. 1, more than 1,240 victories… and counting. The geometry is also quite staggering: the backhand slices and accelerated forehands impossibly tangent to the sidelines, the trajectories of the serves and the angles of the volleys. But from now on, whatever the scoreboard says can only make his legend grow. Because his game plays out mostly in non-computable fields: the grace of his every movement, his efforts seemingly effortless, his elegance on and off the courts… **In time, Roger Federer's legacy will prove more perpetual than any number.**

#Perpetual

OYSTER PERPETUAL
SKY-DWELLER

ROLEX

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5,500 MILES

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TIME ZONES

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ALPINE EAGLE XL CHRONO

The pure yet bold Alpine Eagle XL Chrono is a column-wheel chronograph equipped with a flyback function. Its 44 mm case houses the Chopard 03.05-C chronometer-certified automatic movement, for which three patents have been registered. This exceptional timepiece is made of Lucent Steel A223, an exclusive ultra-resistant metal based on four years of research and development. Proudly handcrafted by our artisans, it represents the expertise and innovation cultivated in our Manufacture.

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Letter from the Founder

While escapism is often seen as a coping mechanism, I look at it differently. Escapism to me is the ability to wholeheartedly lose oneself. To momentarily break free from the hegemonic oppression of reality by immersing one's mind in a realm that provides for the soothing decoupling from the diabolical dissonance of daily life. The beauty about escapism is that you can travel many roads to this destination. From transcendental meditation to Burgundian appreciation, the pathways to escape are myriad.

For me, escapism has often been horological in nature. For example, I can achieve that precious mental escape by looking at my incredible tourbillon created by my friend Denis Flageollet for his brand, De Bethune. The basis of a tourbillon is as follows. From the onset, watches were meant not just as time-telling devices but to be the crowning ornament of a gentleman. As such, there has always existed an inextricable link between style and watches. In response to the fashion for tighter, smaller waistcoats at the French court, a watchmaker named Jean-Antoine Lépine had to re-conceptualise pocket-watch movements. His most famous invention is the hanging or flying barrel, which takes the normally bulky spring that powers a watch and slims it down by attaching it to only one side of the movement's plate. Thanks to him, gentlemen could arrive at court with the ultimate in refined horological accoutrement ensconced in their rakishly cut waistcoats. But because pocket-watches spent the majority of their time, as the name implies, stuffed inside their owners' bespoke pockets, and were often hung upright on night stands, watchmakers noticed an issue. Watches would often lose accuracy because the heart of the watch, known as the 'regulator' — consisting of a balance wheel attached to a spring and a device that locked and unlocked power to the wheel, named the escapement — was spending too much time in the vertical position.

If you can imagine a spiral spring turned vertically, you can also imagine gravity pulling it down and causing it to deform. Also, friction on all the mechanical gears is increased by gravity. Fortunately, in 1801 a brilliant Swiss watchmaker named Abraham-Louis Breguet, who had moved to Paris to supply the French court, came up with a solution. He took the parts affected by gravity and placed them all within a wonderful sculptural-looking cage. This cage would rotate once around its axis at regular intervals, bringing the regulator into different positions along the vertical axis. As such, it would average out the errors caused by gravity. He named this after the French word for 'whirlwind' — tourbillon.

O.K., cut to about 200 years later and you have the emergence for the first time of the tourbillon in wristwatches. It was Audemars Piguet who in 1986 made history by producing the first tourbillon wristwatch made in series. Soon afterwards, many watchmakers and brands followed suit. After a while people began asking the obvious question. Which was, "If the tourbillon was created to solve errors created by gravity when a watch is in the vertical position, does it have any advantage in a wristwatch that adopts a multitude of positions?" Many of the world's most talented watchmakers responded. Some created tourbillons that had more than one axis of rotation. Others mounted the regulator on a type of gimbal so that it would stay in the same position. But for Denis Flageollet, it was all about lightness and speed. He created the world's lightest tourbillon cage, which weighs only 0.18 grams and is made entirely from titanium and silicon. He then made it rotate twice as quickly as a normal one-minute tourbillon; his completes a full revolution every 30 seconds. He then developed the balance wheel to be as light as possible. His first experiments involved a wheel whose four inner arms were constructed from silicon and a weighted rim made from white-gold. He ensured that the speed at which the balance wheel oscillated was much faster than normal, at 5 Hertz or 360,000 vibrations per hour. The result is a micro-mechanical universe that is so visually stunning you cannot help but be drawn to it.

Indeed, as I write these words I've been drawn into a kind of reverie, so powerful is the escape offered by this watch. Regardless of which pathway you choose to escape this summer — whether you are reading the magazine having emerged from a dip in the Aegean Sea, or are leafing through it after a blissful lunch filled with rosé or having piloted your vintage cabriolet along the enchanting roads of the Amalfi Coast — I wish you a wonderful and edifying getaway.

—Wei Koh, Founder & Editorial Director
@wei_koh_revolution

RICHARD MILLE

RM 72-01

www.richardmille.com

Letter from the Editor-in-Chief

For some time my happy place has been a tiny town called Bargemon, in France, where I got married and every year spend a few weeks doing very little. Editing a magazine is a noisy game, so the kind of quiet available in Bargemon feels like a revolutionary change — it provides a contentment and catharsis that perhaps other people get from yoga retreats or weekends in Ibiza. Bargemon is also far from the crowds south of the A8. The remote hills of the Var region, above the vineyards, are a retreat from sparklers attached to champagne as well as tourists who would otherwise be spending their way through Dubai were it not high summer in the desert. Not that I'm a snob or anything.

Recently, however, I have reconnected with the British countryside. England's green and pleasant land has provided the kind of pastoral sustenance that may have been the norm for Brits 50 years ago. It's true, the £20 bargain to fly an hour and a half to the south of France for (frankly) much more reliable weather is a lure to which we have all become accustomed, and yet the experience of revisiting the spiritual home of music hall and English stereotypes — along the nation's south coast — has been invigorating. I am not alone in this: Covid has revived the staycation and revealed the innate and enduring charm of local-heritage fudge shops (no joke), Regency architecture, ostinato seagull caws, and ice cream. Oh, the endless ice cream.

As we drift into summer, it made sense for us to compile an escapism issue. Escapism is a loose concept: it could involve escaping near or far for a break or spending time engrossed in a book or a favourite hobby. The first time Wei, our dear and beloved founder, took me for dinner, I asked what his greatest food experience had been, and despite his living in Singapore, with some of the greatest sushi restaurants on his doorstep, he told me about a truck stop in Tuscany, where he was given the only dish on the menu: wild boar ragout with fresh pappardelle. The boar came from the local forest and was killed by hunters who likely would have been eating at the same rural diner. The fact that this simple, inexpensive experience stuck with him defines the idea of escapism — an experience into which we can shift our minds when we feel like it, far removed from the anxiety and stress we all usually share.

This issue of *The Rake* touches on topics and matters that we hope will spark joy and bring refuge, even for a short while. We start with the captain, our captain, of the issue, Ethan Hawke. His career has positioned him in multiple ways, but like our previous cover stars Matt Damon, Josh Brolin and Willem Dafoe, Hawke is now a statesman of the industry, a grown-up who seeks craft over celebrity. Our conversation was as high-spirited as it was stimulating, as he is a great thinker and possesses a fierce intellect. I enjoyed talking to him immensely.

We also linger in this issue on a wonderful dedication, by Nick Foulkes, to our great Lady Sovereign. The Queen celebrated her platinum jubilee in early June. After 70 years of service as head of state, our 96-year-old monarch has earned the admiration of not only the nation but the world. My opinions on the subject are well documented, and at any given moment in June you might catch me singing, in cheerful voice, "God save the Queen".

Elsewhere, Stuart Husband returns us to the world of Slim Aarons, but off the slopes and back to the coast — specifically the Mexican coast, in Acapulco, where once you would find the jet set taking a break from France or Marbella. Stuart also profiles the war hero and author whose Bond stories sent us into a frenzy of fantasy and aspiration: Ian Fleming. Fleming's creative endeavours are well known and rightly lauded, but his exploits before and during the war have recently attracted more attention, and you'll not be blamed for seeing a lot of his fictional spy in Fleming's own life.

We welcome the return of Davinia Pelegri and Oriol Elcacho to the magazine. They appear together in front of the camera in a shoot on the Costa Brava helmed by Diego Merino. And we welcome, for the first time, Lady Amelia and Lady Eliza Spencer, who become part of our expanding Mrs Rake universe.

We also speak to Fabrizio Buonamassa Stigliani, the designer of the much-celebrated Bulgari Octo Finissimo Ultra. He is a man with a passion for sketches, style and *sprezzatura*, and his inclusion in *The Rake* is long overdue.

Traditionally, this is the issue of the magazine that readers take with them to some far-flung destination — or, if you're like me, on the car seat down the A303. Wherever you read this letter, may it be part of a mental retreat, a recuperation that allows you to recharge and find resolve. Escapism, we remind ourselves, is an undertaking that employs the three most important virtues from Ethan Hawke's novel *Rules for a Knight*: solitude, courage and love.

Enjoy the issue.

— Tom Chamberlin, Editor-in-Chief
@tfchamberlin

KIM LANG

الإتحاد
ETIHAD
AIRWAYS

Business Traveller Middle East Awards 2022

Best Cabin Crew

Contributors

CHARLIE GRAY

Charlie is a British international fashion and portrait photographer based in London. His playful vision and dedication to the art of narrative grew out of his love of theatre and early documentary photographic projects. Charlie has captured some of the most famous faces of our time; equally, he often shoots poetic fashion stories with film and theatre's faces of tomorrow. In this issue, Charlie flew to New York to shoot our cover star, Ethan Hawke. Such is Charlie's professionalism, the fact there was a live bird of prey on set was no major hurdle. See the results of his shoot with Hawke (and hawk) on page 74.

KIM LANG

The Luxembourg-born photographer Kim Lang had his first taste of the medium at an early age, as he travelled around the world during his childhood with his grandfather, who was an animal-documentary filmmaker. Moving to London at the age of 20 in 2010 set Kim on his own journey into the world of art, portraiture and fashion photography. Since then he has worked for independent and commercial publications alike, crafting eclectic imagery that evokes a sense of classic and conceptual art, and with a strong graphic composition. For this issue, Kim shot the Welsh actor Gwilym Lee for our Rake-in-Progress interview (page 34) and our fashion spread featuring Lady Eliza and Lady Amelia Spencer (page 110).

NICK FOULKES

Nick, the historian, author and Contributing Editor at *The Rake* — and surely London's most prominent luxury commentator — writes for periodicals including *How To Spend It*, the *Financial Times*, *Vanity Fair* and *The Daily Telegraph*. Among his many published tomes to date are the Count d'Orsay biography *Last of the Dandies* (2005), *Dunhill by Design* (2006), *TAG Heuer* (2009), *Cigar Style* (2008), *Gentlemen and Blackguards: Gambling Mania and the Plot to Steal the Derby of 1844* (2010), *Swans, Legends of the Jet Society* (2013), *Bernard Buffet: The Invention of the Modern Mega-Artist* (2016), and the finest compendium on combustible agriculture, *Cigars*. Nick's assignment for this issue of *The Rake* was both enviable and daunting: a profile of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II for our platinum jubilee dedication (page 20).

STUART HUSBAND

Stuart's freelance forays to date have seen his baroque prose grace the pages of all the major British broadsheets, as well as magazines such as *Monocle*. Sir Michael Caine, Paulo Coelho, Dev Patel, Dame Vivienne Westwood, Amy Winehouse, Patricia Cornwell, Woody Allen and Lord Sugar have all been subject to his journalistic scrutiny. Stuart is never one to turn down a challenge, especially when it allows him to dip back into old passions and interests. Turn to page 42 for Stuart's examination of the life of author Ian Fleming (which confounds the notion that Fleming was nothing more than Moneypenny in a suit), and to page 92 for his appreciation of the midcentury high life in Acapulco.

cover photographer ***charlie gray***
fashion direction ***grace gilfeather***

Leather western shirt, **Ralph Lauren Purple Label**; cotton vest, **Sunspel**; silver chain necklace, **The Great Frog**.

STILE LATINO

direttore creativo | Vincenzo Attolini

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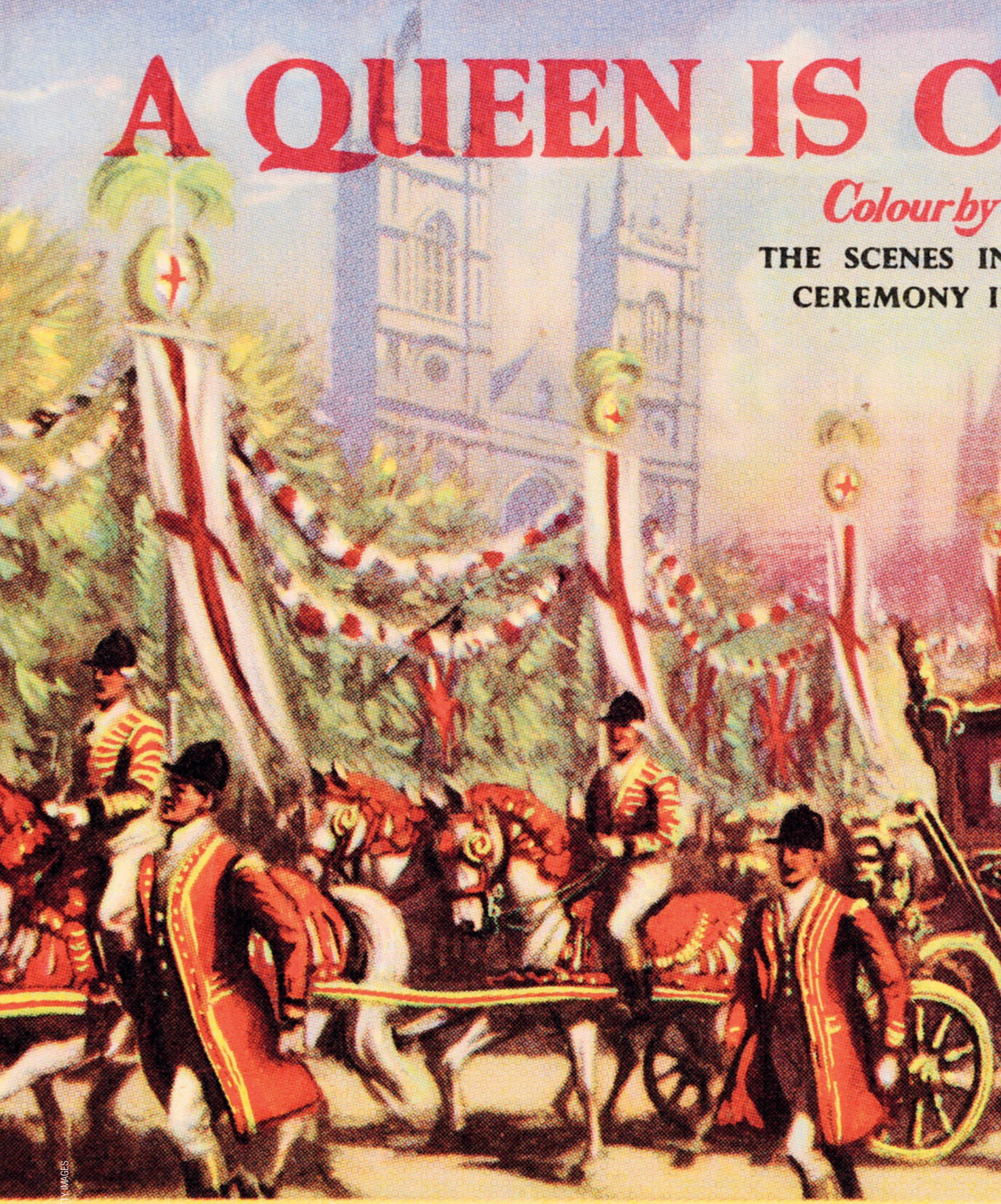

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FILM OF THE CORONATION

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arbiter

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Musical Adviser
SIR MALCOLM SARGENT

Special music by
GUY WARRACK

played by
THE LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

GRACE PERIOD

For an eye-watering 70 years, Queen Elizabeth II has managed to alchemise a sense of majesty, mystery and simple humanity. One might even argue that hers has been a divine blessing...

by ***nick foulkes***

Tis call'd the evil:
A most miraculous work in this good king;
Which often, since my here-remain in England,
I have seen him do. How he solicits heaven,
Himself best knows: but strangely-visited people,
All swoln and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
The mere despair of surgery, he cures,
Hanging a golden stamp about their necks,
Put on with holy prayers: and 'tis spoken,
To the succeeding royalty he leaves
The healing benediction. With this strange virtue,
He hath a heavenly gift of prophecy,
And sundry blessings hang about his throne,
That speak him full of grace.

These words are spoken by Malcolm in Act IV of *Macbeth*. The 'good king' in question is Edward the Confessor, one of the last of England's Anglo-Saxon monarchs.

The king's touch capable of restoring those scrofulous wretches to health was a medieval belief that persisted into the early 17th century, when Shakespeare wrote his Scottish play in part to ingratiate himself with the new man on the throne: James I of England, the sixth ruler of Scotland to go by that name and allegedly a descendant of Banquo. James had a more than passing interest in the occult (hence the witches), but the healing touch was more than a leftover superstition. It had been a live political issue for James's predecessor, Elizabeth. When the papal bull *Regnans in Excelsis* had excommunicated Elizabeth I, she needed to demonstrate that God had not withdrawn the magic touch, and with it the legitimacy of her rule.

James's son Charles I was particularly jealous in protecting his monopoly. In an essay in the journal Anglican and Episcopal History, James F. Turrell contended that "any attempt to heal scrofula by touch would represent an infringement on royal power and prerogative", and could result in imprisonment. The healing touch was part of the package that came with the divine right of kings, that doctrinal justification for the existence of the absolute monarch answerable only to God, and certainly no sublunary man-made authority like parliament. We all know how well that worked out for Charles I, and with the restoration of Charles II the country began its slow drift to the constitutional monarchy of today.

Of course, we 21st century beings are above such mumbo jumbo. Many of us have a hard time believing in God, let alone the idea that he delegates his power on Earth to a being called a king or queen who rules us because of an accident of birth and who has such superpowers as healing the sick. That sort of nonsense might work in the Marvel film franchise, but it is almost embarrassing to think that we once believed it.

And yet, in June 2017, Malcolm's words echoed faintly in my brain. Shortly before 1am on June 14, a fire broke out in a tower block in west London; by daybreak, one of the worst peacetime disasters of the modern era had unfolded in all its horror. Visiting the still smouldering ruins of Grenfell Tower the following day, Prime Minister Theresa May did not meet any of the residents. Instead, television coverage showed her protected by legions of police seemingly deployed for crowd control, as they might be at a riot, rather than for assistance at the scene of a terrible tragedy.

The visit of H.M. the Queen the day after was very different. Accompanied by her grandson, the Duke of Cambridge, her features composed in a dignified expression of concern, she appeared visibly distressed as she walked among local residents, and there was spontaneous applause as she thanked emergency service workers for their valorous response.

There had been fury at the appalling, apparently emotionless, response by the elected leader of the country, and it seemed that the prime minister's response had risked making a tragic situation even more painful and divisive. It had taken this small nonagenarian woman wearing antiquated clothes to show how such things should be done: neither patronising nor playing to the attendant media with clumsy attempts at tactile comfort. She could provide little, if indeed anything, of tangible

GETTY IMAGES

Queen Elizabeth II, Prince Philip and Prince Charles take part in Trooping the Colour at Buckingham Palace in 1980.

Clockwise from top left: Elizabeth as a child at the silver jubilee celebrations of George V; a portrait for her 14th birthday, in 1940; Elizabeth as a subaltern in the Auxiliary Territorial Service, working as a mechanic in the second world war; with her father and sister, Margaret, during the royal tour to South Africa in 1947; and showing her early riding acumen with her father in 1935.

GETTY IMAGES

Woman
Coronation Number
Presentation Portrait of Our Happy Queen
Painted specially for WOMAN by MARGARET LINDSAY WILLIAMS
HISTORIC SILK CORONATION SOUVENIR

The coronation of Queen Elizabeth II on June 2, 1953. The Queen's coach in Regent Street, London.

benefit to those who had lost their lives, their loved ones, and their homes. Yet her presence had a benevolent effect.

By then she had a lifetime's experience to draw upon, and she did not delay — as she had just over half a century earlier, when visiting Aberfan in Wales, the scene of a disaster in 1966 that saw a school engulfed by a landslide of mining waste. At the time her absence was censured, and the incident was seen as being sufficiently important to warrant a telling in an episode of *The Crown*.

But she was forgiven. "If the Queen does regret not coming here straight away, I think that is misplaced," said one of the survivors in 2002. "When she did arrive she was visibly upset and the people of Aberfan appreciated her being here." She may have believed that she would have been unable to help. But as that survivor's account shows, her mere presence was a symbol of care.

Happily, most of us meet the Queen in less distressing circumstances: civic celebrations, sporting fixtures, charitable events, investitures, inaugurations. For those outside her family, social circle and professional entourage — in other words, those who do not know her — the event is special, a memory that endures a lifetime. It may last only a couple of minutes, maybe even a matter of seconds, but no matter how brief or banal the encounter, it is burned into the memory. Celebrity, especially in our times, has a shelf life: it appears that Her Majesty's value does not. Passing through Gibraltar airport the other day, I was surprised and pleased to see the front page of the *Gibraltar Chronicle* from May 11, 1954, expanded and plastered on a wall: "A devoted people greet their Queen"... "From every home a flag, from every street and lane a cheer"... Such sentiments might be easy to discount and dismiss, especially in our post-imperial times, when colonial history leaves uncomfortable questions. Nevertheless, these feelings of excitement and affection around a visit by the Queen still resonate.

Celebrity, especially in our times, has a shelf life: it appears that Her Majesty's value does not.

And yet, but for switchback corners, hairpin bends, breakdowns and spectacular crashes on the Scalextric set of royal life, she might be just a little-remarked-upon minor member of the royal family with a fondness for headscarves and racehorses; the daughter of a long-dead duke and the niece of a king who succumbed to throat cancer half a century ago. But because Edward VIII chose his love of Wallis over love of country, forcing his younger brother to wear the crown he had neither expected nor desired, and because worn out by the strains of war and heavy smoking he died at the age of 56, his then 25-year-old daughter became Queen. Seven decades later she is still there.

It is worth recalling that as well as Her Majesty's platinum jubilee, this year represents the 50th anniversary of the death of her uncle David, who ruled notoriously briefly as Edward VIII

Clockwise from top left: **On the balcony of Buckingham Palace following then Princess Elizabeth's wedding to Prince Philip, 1947; Elizabeth and Philip with Prince Charles and Princess Anne in 1951, a year before Elizabeth ascended the throne; an intimate portrait of the Queen and Prince Philip at Balmoral, 1972; at the state opening of parliament in 2007; the Queen with Jawaharlal Nehru, the prime minister of India, Krishna Menon, India's minister of defence, and the Duke of Edinburgh in 1961; presenting Philip with a trophy at the Ascot Week polo tournament.**

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The Queen presents the Jules Rimet trophy to Bobby Moore after England's 4-2 victory over West Germany in the 1966 World Cup final.

before abdicating to spend more time with his much-divorced American wife and his extensive wardrobe. Edward left this life on May 28, 1972. On June 3 of this year, a grateful nation marked 70 years of service by his niece. There is no precedent; this is *terra incognita*. Britain has never celebrated a reign of such length, a span of years that appears even longer than it is because of the rapid pace of contemporary events.

And that is what makes the Queen such an impressive figure. She is the distillation of the nation's history, the embodiment of what A.N. Wilson, in his excellent book *The Queen*, describes as a historical reality. What is indisputable is that however turbulent the intervening millennium, and however knotted and tangled the branches of the family tree, Wilson writes, "the Queen, whether or not you approve of the fact, really is the descendant of William the Conqueror". He adds: "When she was crowned in Westminster Abbey, in a ceremony which still, when you watch it, has the power to electrify the viewer, she was taking upon herself the mantle of the past."

"The Queen, whether or not you approve of the fact, really is the descendant of William the Conqueror."

Let's not forget that she was crowned in a building dedicated to religious faith founded by one of her ancestors. She holds the title of 'Defender of the Faith and Supreme Governor of the Church of England', and when anointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury at her coronation she took the solemn oath to "maintain and preserve inviolably the settlement of the Church of England, and the doctrine, worship, discipline and government thereof, as by law established in England".

Yes, that's right, she has her own religion, and yet in thinking of Her Majesty, I am reminded of Pliny the Younger's panegyric in praise of Emperor Trajan: "Let us not address him with the flattering title of a god or divinity; for we speak not of a tyrant but of a fellow citizen; not of a master but of a father. He boasts that he is one of us; nor does he forget that he is only a man, though the ruler of men."

Such are Pliny's rhetorical gifts that he is able to conflate divinity, majesty and simple mortal humanity in the person of Trajan. It is a masterpiece of flattery and intellectual dexterity, and our Queen would doubtless shudder at such an encomium. However, when Wilson writes that the coronation ceremony, with its grave, intoning commentary by Richard Dimbleby, still has the power to electrify, he is saying that something similar has been achieved through the concentration of ritual, history and mystery in one person. The importance of the maintenance of mystery is not to be underestimated; in spite of the many articles, books, documentaries, drama series and films covering the Queen's life, she continues to be enigmatic. "I don't fully understand her," said Archbishop of Canterbury Robert Runcie, "but that's part of her secret."

The Queen astride her horse, Imperial, during Trooping the Colour on the day of the Queen's official birthday parade, June 1957.

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Opposite, clockwise from top left: presidents and prime ministers: **The Queen meets Harry S. Truman; Dwight D. Eisenhower; John F. Kennedy and Jackie Kennedy; Ronald Reagan; Barack and Michelle Obama; Joe Biden; Boris Johnson; Donald Trump; David Cameron; George H.W. Bush and Barbara Bush; Richard Nixon; Gerald Ford; Jimmy Carter; George W. Bush; Theresa May; and Bill and Hillary Clinton.**

This page: **on board HMY Britannia in March 1972.**

Although shown on television, the ceremony is all the more impressive for appearing to be broadcast directly from a distant past. As a piece of immaculately choreographed national theatre it is gripping, and all in all compellingly effective. Inarguably a piece of anachronistic flummery, nonetheless it touches and moves the emotions. But to be cynical for a moment, the coronation of 1953 had every reason to be effective: by the time Elizabeth came to the throne, we had had plenty of practice at pageantry. By that time the century had witnessed three other coronations, as well as the funerals of four monarchs. Anyone aged 70 at the time Elizabeth became Queen had lived as an adult during the reigns of Queen Victoria, Edward VII, George V, Edward VII, George VI, and then Elizabeth II. Now, as she passes 70 years as Queen, one generation has been born, received some form of education, worked for anything up to half a century, and entered retirement knowing no other head of state.

"I want to show that the crown is not merely an abstract symbol but a living bond between you and me."

But change elsewhere, pretty much everywhere else, has been seismic: religious observance, sexual mores, social boundaries, transport and technology are unrecognisable, as is so much else. All along our national journey, from Dame Vera Lynn to Dua Lipa, Her Majesty has been our faithful companion.

When Elizabeth began her reign, Winston Churchill was in Downing Street, Britain could still consider itself a world power, and lethal pea-souper fogs clogged London's winter air. Many aspects of British life would have been recognisable to the visitor from Victorian times. Indeed, the arrival of the new young queen was viewed in nostalgic terms: much was made of this being a new Elizabethan age. Even progress was retro: the 1957 Boulting brothers' adaptation of Kingsley Amis's *Lucky Jim* featured the following preamble on screen: "A redbrick university in Britain's new Elizabethan Age: Here are moulded the intellectual Drakes and Raleighs of tomorrow — fearless, independent… and state supported!"

A neo-Tudor soothsayer would have had little difficulty predicting a 20th century re-run of the Elizabethan age. Coronation day coincided with news in *The Times* of the conquest of Everest. This feat was reported by James Morris, who, in 2020, as Jan Morris, wrote: "The ascent was the last such achievement of the British empire, and it was capped by the circumstance that my report of it was published in London on June 2, 1953, the very morning of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II — the start, as it was fondly thought then, of a new Elizabethan age."

It was heady stuff, but wisely and characteristically, the Queen was keen to minimise the fuss and bring things down to Earth. "I want to show that the crown is not merely an abstract symbol of our unity but a personal and living bond between

Clockwise from top: The Queen visits Aberfan after the disaster in 1966; lays a wreath at Ground Zero; abides by Covid rules by sitting alone at Prince Philip's funeral in 2021; meets firefighters after the Grenfell Tower disaster in 2017; and takes her place leading the nation in the annual commemoration at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday.

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Left, a style icon: During her royal tour of Australia in 1954.

Right: Opening the Queen's Walkway in Windsor on her 90th birthday.

you and me," she said in the Christmas broadcast of her coronation year. "Some people have expressed the hope that my reign may mark a new Elizabethan age. Frankly, I do not myself feel at all like my great Tudor forbear, who was blessed with neither husband nor children, who ruled as a despot and was never able to leave her native shores." Although some of the content sounds jarring to 21st century ears — she talked of Britain leading "other, still backward, territories" — she is at pains to stress the post-imperial nature of her and our "ancient kingdom".

Change has been seismic: sexual mores, religious observance, technology and transport are unrecognisable.

For her silver jubilee, silver ingot pendants were struck, while streets decked with patriotic bunting saw her subjects don plastic Union Jack bowler hats and sit at trestle tables to feast on Angel Delight and other period-appropriate delicacies. For her golden anniversary, Brian May played the national anthem on his electric guitar while standing atop Buckingham Palace. For her diamond jubilee, she and her husband stood for hours on a boat that sailed down the Thames in lashing rain. She then experienced an onslaught of popular entertainment delivered by a heterogenous bunch including Lang Lang, Paul McCartney, Robbie Williams and Grace Jones, with interludes (disturbingly) from Rolf Harris, *inter alia*. The BBC's coverage of this historic anniversary is largely remembered for its interview with the famous royal commentator and constitutional expert Paloma Faith about her new record, as well as jubilee memorabilia including a commemorative sick bag.

The platinum jubilee was shaping up to be similarly topical, with the now mandatory 'Party at the Palace', outlined on the government website in the broadest of terms: "With state-of-the-art technology and a stunning stage design, the event will feature an incredible range of highlights from global music stars with a full, live orchestra to actors from film, T.V. and the stage telling the story and celebrating some of the most significant cultural moments from the Queen's seven-decade reign." Those of us without tickets were invited to "join the Platinum Jubilee story on social media using #HM70 and #PlatinumJubilee".

At the time of writing, that time-honoured communications conduit, the anonymous 'palace insider', had dropped heavy hints that H.M. might be too frail to make it onto the balcony at the palace. To be honest, who among us, at the age of 96, would put ourselves through such a multimedia, state-of-the-art, hashtag-commemorated ordeal. Not me, certainly, and probably, if you are honest, not you. But you could have set your watch by the prospect that, were it humanly possible, the Queen would turn up and express polite enthusiasm, because that is what she has done for the last 70 years.

God save the Queen.

Clockwise from top: The Queen meets Raquel Welch and Woody Allen in 1966; greets her first prime minister, Winston Churchill; meets Marilyn Monroe in 1956; Jayne Mansfield curtseys *comme il faut* in 1957; and Frank Sinatra bows on introduction to the Queen in 1958.

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The Queen in London in 1977.

GWILYM THE CONQUEROR

Gwilym Lee will soon be back on our screens as critics' favourite Grigor Dymov in the period satire The Great. He talks to **THE RAKE** *about wild costumes, imposter syndrome, and playing Brian May in front of… Brian May.*

by **chris cotonou** *photography* **kim lang** *fashion direction* **amelia hudson**

In The Great, the court of Catherine II of Russia unfolds like a comic marionette show. The acclaimed television satire is a modern Hogarthian take on the period drama, setting the stage for Gwilym Lee's suave Grigor as he survives the perils of court life. Or perhaps not. "We never know if we're going to be killed off next," he says with a laugh.

With the third season of The Great announced, it seems we will be seeing more of Lee. His portrayal has made him a favourite among viewers and critics alike, garnering award nominations from the Screen Actors Guild. With its sweeping story and witty script, Lee is well positioned to pull off the tragic Grigor: Lee is an alumnus of Guildhall, a one-time player for the Royal Shakespeare Company, and a star of television dramas. Perhaps you also recognise him from his performance as Brian May in Bohemian Rhapsody (the hair is a little shorter today).

As he prepares to get back into the thick of 18th-century Russian court life, we spoke to Gwilym about the art of acting, scriptwriting, his knack for carpentry, and why he would someday love to play Aneurin Bevan, the Welsh midcentury politician who created Britain's National Health Service.

In The Great, your character, Grigor, is one of a few who doesn't have a real-life counterpart. How much freedom did you have to shape his personality?

Tony [McNamara], our show writer, wanted to separate the show from the historical restraints. It was liberating not to consult the books. When we showed up, we even had these history books ready, but Tony assured us they weren't needed. There was free rein within the foundations of his musical scriptwriting. On set, the real focus is on hitting the beat and rhythm of his words. But our fate is not in our hands. Some of us don't make it, and we fly far too close to the sun sometimes in Tony's script. I suppose that's true of court life.

How well do you think Gwilym Lee would handle real court life?

I always equate it with being in a university hall of residence. We're all living on top of each other, we all know each other's business, and it can be rather exciting but a bit wild. This court, like halls, is full of hedonism and partying. Personally, I'd like to think I would just be having fun. It's one thing I share with Grigor and I like that aspect of his personality. We're the 'good time' guys.

What was it like wearing the period costumes?

Incredible. Our costume designer, Sharon Long, takes the mad anarchic world from the script and carries it through to the outfits. There's an unexpected madness, something punk about her reimagining of historical fashions. It's always fun gathering on set with your fellow actors to see what costumes everyone is wearing that day. I'm not sure I'm ready to take these outfits out, though. I lived in Hackney for a long time, and that might be the only place you can get away with it. But this is one aspect I love about my job: learning about the history of tailoring, the cut of a jacket, the stockings, all up to the pocket-squares.

You've performed an eclectic range of roles, from film to theatre. Is there a routine or process you follow when researching a character?

You're always looking for the facts: any indication of who the character is and where they're from. Then I try to find the missing pieces by asking questions. Who is this person? What don't we know about them? It's like being a detective. I often make a list of things I can relate to with the character, and then the things that are different. Otherwise, it's easy to fit them to your own personality. When I play an iconic, oft-trodden role, as I did in the Royal Shakespeare Company, I try to imagine this is the first time anyone has ever played this character.

In Bohemian Rhapsody, you played Brian May. What are the challenges of playing somebody who is likely to see your portrayal of them?

He was on set every day. But the pressure came from how loved Brian and Queen are by the audience — not him — and you want to do justice to that. He didn't give me advice, but certainly helped on the technical musical side. Our real aim was to look as much like our characters as possible on stage, even in the way Brian plays guitar. We weren't making a documentary, just telling a story. So I looked for my version of his humanity in the script. It must be nerve-racking for him, too.

You began writing during lockdown. What are the sort of stories, or characters, that came to you?

I've always wanted to do it, but I've been too busy or haven't had the confidence. The lockdown, as tragic as it was for people, gave a lot of us free time. So I collaborated with a German writer, director and actor, and we wrote something. It was experimental. There was no intention to have it made. But we have a script, and

Khaki gabardine safari jacket and brown flannel house trousers, **Edward Sexton**; cream Sea Island cotton shirt, blue silk tie and yellow cotton pocket-square, **Budd Shirtmakers**.

This page:
Grapefruit pink heritage jacket, **Edward Sexton**; navy cashmere T-shirt, **Brioni**; pink cotton pocket-square, **Budd Shirtmakers**.

Opposite page:
Ink blue wool and cashmere Milford coat, **Belstaff**; sky blue cotton Budd stripe shirt and green paisley tie, **Budd Shirtmakers**; white cotton pleated trousers, **Brunello Cucinelli**; brown suede Galway boot, **Edward Green**.
Belt, *stylist's own*.

we'll see. It really made me think of the technical side of acting — helped me understand why certain characters resonate, or do not, with actors like me. Now, reading a book or an article, I think, That would make a fantastic film or series. The stories of everyday life are like a narrative. The script has taken a back seat since, but I should finish what I started.

If you were not an actor, what would you like to do?
I would still be making something. A craftsman of some sorts, perhaps working with cabinets or furniture, like an artisan. I continued doing woodwork during the lockdown to stay busy, otherwise I would go mad. It's very satisfying, and on set I always imagine which piece of furniture I would like to take home, especially the opulent pieces on *The Great*. Of course, I don't think my woodwork is up to those standards. Yet.

You've said that you identify strongly with your Welsh heritage. Is there a figure from Welsh history or folklore you would particularly love to portray?
Good question. I mean there's the usual — Owain Glyndwr and his story of Welsh resistance, of evading the English invaders. There are more castles in Wales per square mile than anywhere else in Europe, so that tells you how oppressed people were there in those times, and the magnitude of his heroism. I suppose it's a bit of a 'Braveheart'. But Wales also has great sporting heroes to depict. Rugby is part of our culture. I think I would like to play Aneurin Bevan, who created the NHS. He was also central to the founding of the welfare state. That would be great… Maybe I should write it.

You've been acting since you were 16. Do you remember what brought you on to the stage in the first place?
My first play was *My Fair Lady*. I played Alfie Doolittle at school, but I was 50 years too young. I loved that. In Birmingham, where I grew up, there was the Central Television Workshop for young performers. Then I landed work at the RSC. We went on tour when I was 16, and I was very impressionable. When you tour with a company, it feels like family — like you belong to a community of actors. But you always have imposter syndrome. As an actor, you think someone is going to find you out. Then you have these moments of validation. The Ian Charleson award was one. Going to Guildhall, a respected institution, was another. I thought, O.K., maybe I can do this.

Do you have a personal rule that has offered you comfort and motivation when most needed?
In terms of work? It's always important to take the job seriously, but you don't need to take yourself too seriously, either. Find the joy in the work. Generally speaking, though, I think more of us need to spread kindness. If you turn on the news, you can see the terrible events happening in the world, and I believe we should figure out how to be more empathetic to each other's circumstances and needs. Kindness has never been more necessary.

Beaujolais cashmere blend jacket and chocolate and navy paisley pocket-square, **Edward Sexton**; blue Soyella shirt and jade sunburst silver cufflinks, **Budd Shirtmakers**; grey Gurkha trousers, **Rubinacci**; faded Madras cotton tie, **Ralph Lauren Purple Label**.

RAKE-IN-PROGRESS

Opposite page:
Sky blue cotton Budd stripe shirt, blue silk tie and jade sunburst silver cufflinks, **Budd Shirtmakers**.

This page:
Green suede work jacket, **Valstar**; blue and white linen stripe shirt, **Richard James**; brown flannel house trousers, **Edward Sexton**.

PHOTOGRAPHY ASSISTANT: DERRICK KAKEMBO
GROOMING: DAISY HOLUBOWICZ USING NUDESKIN/NUDESTIX & KEVIN MURPHY

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THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN PEN

Ian Fleming, the author who created James Bond, could never have lived a life like James Bond, could he? Could he?

by ***stuart husband***

To describe a writer who sold 40m copies of his books in his lifetime — inaugurating one of the most profitable franchises in history — as underrated would seem counter-intuitive, but Ian Fleming, the creator of James Bond, has always seemed to provoke the 'yes, but' response ('Yes, but Le Carré was the real deal'; 'Yes, but he was too sybaritic to be serious' — as if the two were mutually exclusive). To be fair, Fleming himself was often foremost among the non-cheerleaders. He described the first Bond novel, *Casino Royale*, as "an oafish opus", and further downplayed expectations in a 1963 BBC radio interview: "I'm not in the Shakespeare stakes. I have no ambition."

Perhaps it was simply politic to hide your light under a bushel if you found yourself a scion of a wealthy banking family with more than its share of flaming comets. Ian's father, Major Valentine Fleming, was a successful barrister and conservative MP who was killed while fighting on the Somme in 1917; his friend Winston Churchill wrote his obituary for *The Times*. His mother, Evelyn St. Croix Fleming, was a legendary beauty and socialite who became muse and mistress to the painter Augustus John following the Major's death. Her avowed disappointment in her middle son could only have been exacerbated by the achievements of his elder brother, Peter. Star student at Eton and Oxford? Check. Explorer of Brazil and the Caucasus and acclaimed travel writer? Check. Grenadier Guards officer during world war II who joined the Special Operations Executive, trained Chinese guerrilla troops, and participated in commando raids in Norway, for which he received an OBE? Checkmate.

Or perhaps not, at least when it comes to Fleming's own wartime exploits. Here, too, the conventional wisdom has it that, despite his position in naval intelligence, he had little access to real secrets. According to the academic and author John Sutherland, his role involved "little more than pushing in-trays, out-trays and ashtrays all day long" — a sort of Moneypenny in a bow-tie. Actually, as new research from the likes of Christopher Moran, a professor of U.S. national security at the University of Warwick, shows, Fleming was "right at the heart of the machinery" — not only in the room where it happened, but also a frequent catalyst for its happening at all.

Fleming had caroused his way through Eton and Sandhurst, and made his way into journalism in the 1930s via a brief and unhappy stint as a merchant banker. In 1933 he covered what became known as the Metro-Vickers affair for *The Times* — a Moscow show-trial in which six British engineers working on the city's metro were accused of espionage. Fleming showed an early bent for skulduggery by creeping into the courtroom on the night before the verdict and cutting all the telephone lines except one, thus ensuring he got the scoop the next day. His reporting in the Soviet Union brought him to the attention of Sir Robert Vansittart, the Permanent Under-secretary at the Foreign Office through the 1930s, who asked him to be the FO's 'eyes and ears' in Stalinist Russia. Fleming produced a report in 1938 whose basic thrust — we can't trust the Soviets but we need to align with them to defeat Nazism — proved remarkably prescient; at the outbreak of war in 1939, he was tapped by Rear Admiral John Godfrey, the Director of Naval Intelligence, to be his personal assistant.

> **"People appreciated his willingness to speak truth to power. He could contradict politicians and policymakers."**

This appointment proved highly advantageous for Fleming. Godfrey, gruff and abrasive, would send his silkily charming P.A., swiftly promoted to Lieutenant Commander, to liaise with other departments including MI5, MI6, the SOE, and Combined Operations — in short, the full deck of British wartime intelligence. He met with Alan Turing, and was privy to the machinations of the codebreaking Enigma and Colossus programmes at a time when the need-to-know basis was so stringent that half of Churchill's war cabinet remained blissfully unaware of their existence. "People appreciated his willingness to speak truth to power," Moran told the We Have Ways of Making You Talk podcast. "He was arrogant enough to contradict the politicians and policymakers, and he came up with a bunch of crazy-sounding schemes, some of which were actually adopted."

One of the latter was Operation Mincemeat, in which false information would be planted on a corpse and discovered by the Germans; in this instance, the body of a Welsh drifter named Glyndwr Michael, whose body was found in a warehouse in King's Cross, was disguised as a Marine captain and floated ashore to Spain adorned with papers detailing fake Greek invasion plans, resulting in German regiments being redeployed to the Balkans and allowing the Allies an opening for a renewed European campaign (in the recently released film version,

Clockwise from top left: As a young naval officer in world war II; at his home, Goldeneye, in Jamaica; with Noël Coward, Pam Akers and friends at Sunset Lodge, Jamaica, circa 1953; and travelling in style in 1964.

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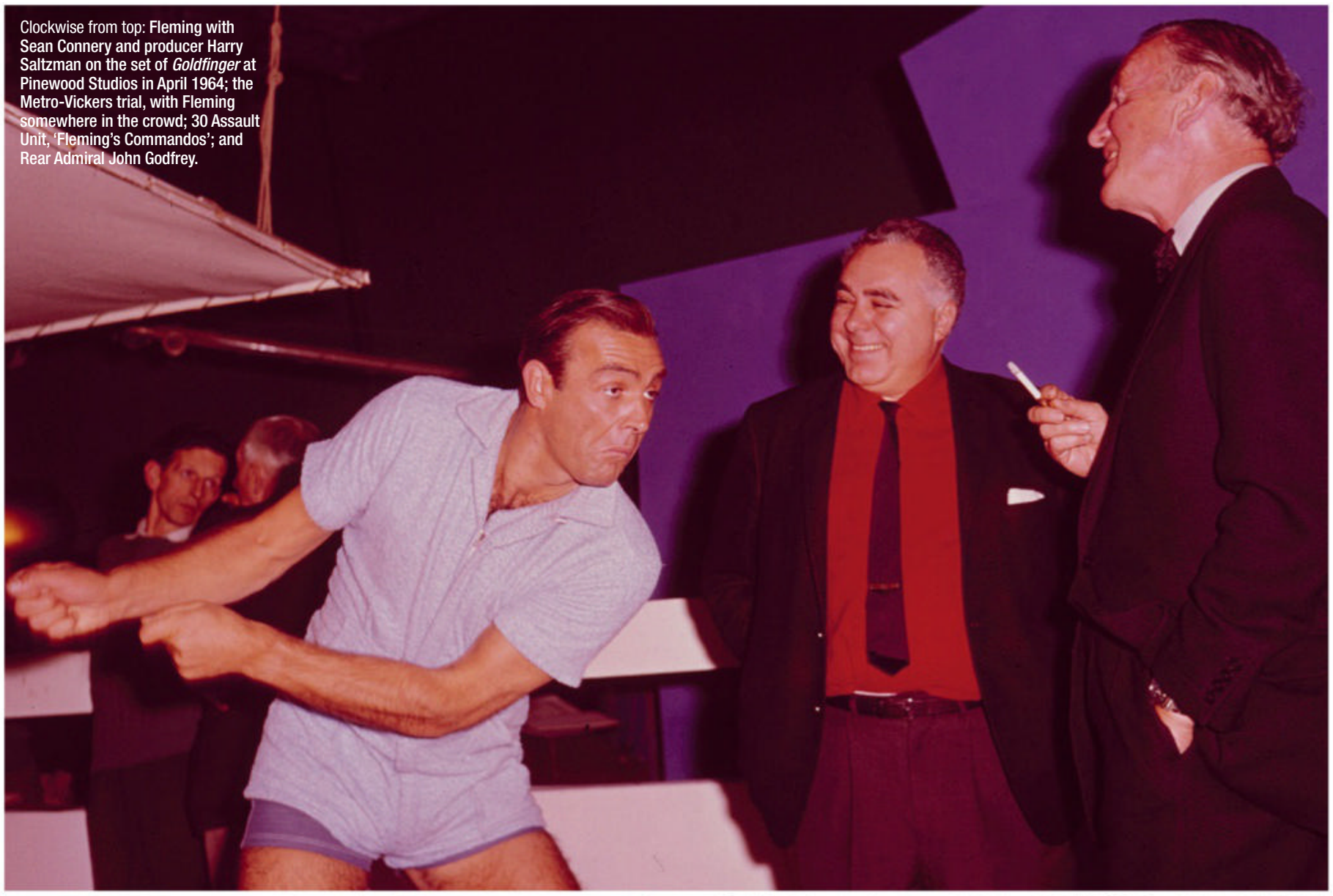
Clockwise from top: Fleming with Sean Connery and producer Harry Saltzman on the set of *Goldfinger* at Pinewood Studios in April 1964; the Metro-Vickers trial, with Fleming somewhere in the crowd; 30 Assault Unit, 'Fleming's Commandos'; and Rear Admiral John Godfrey.



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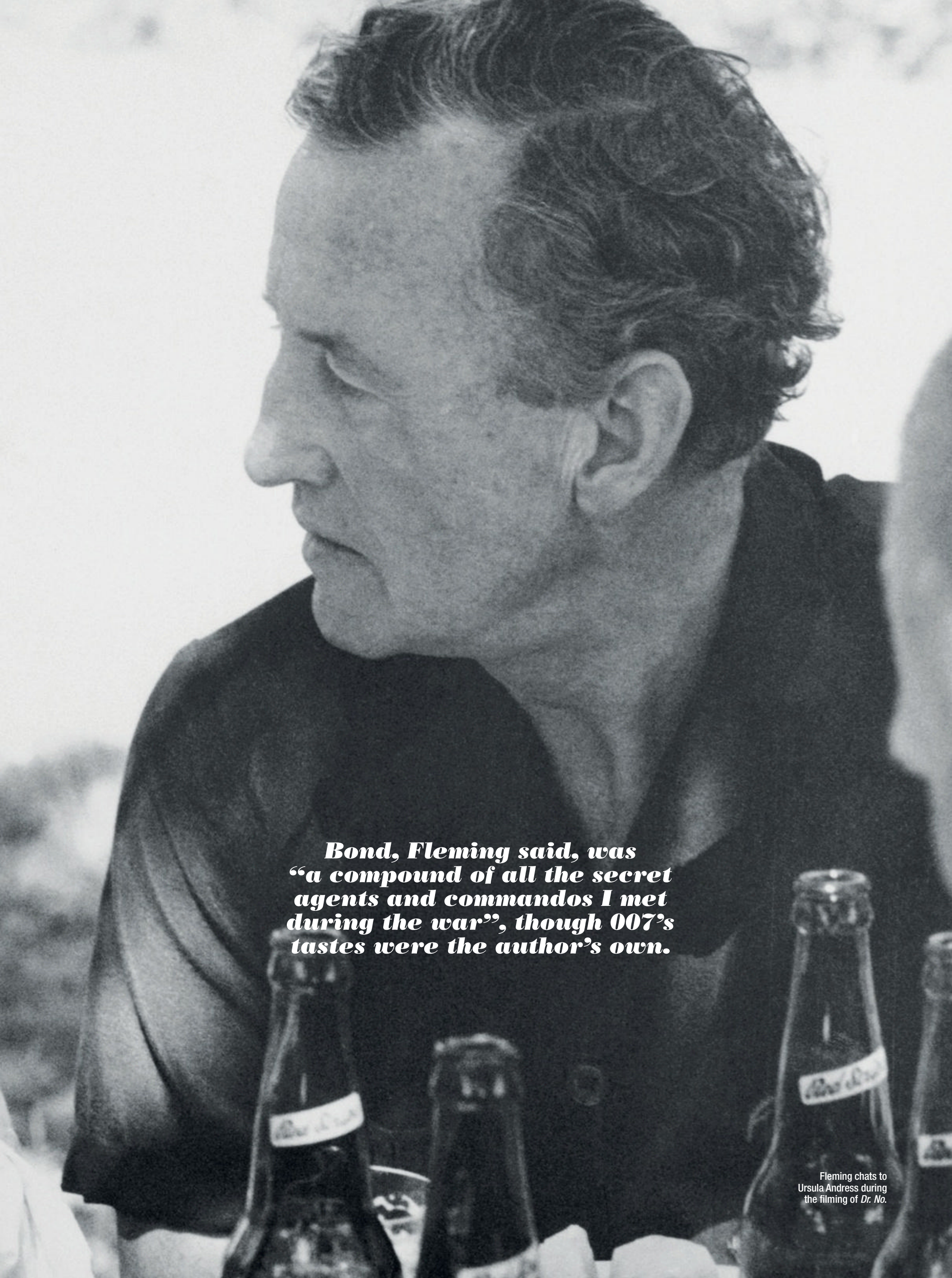
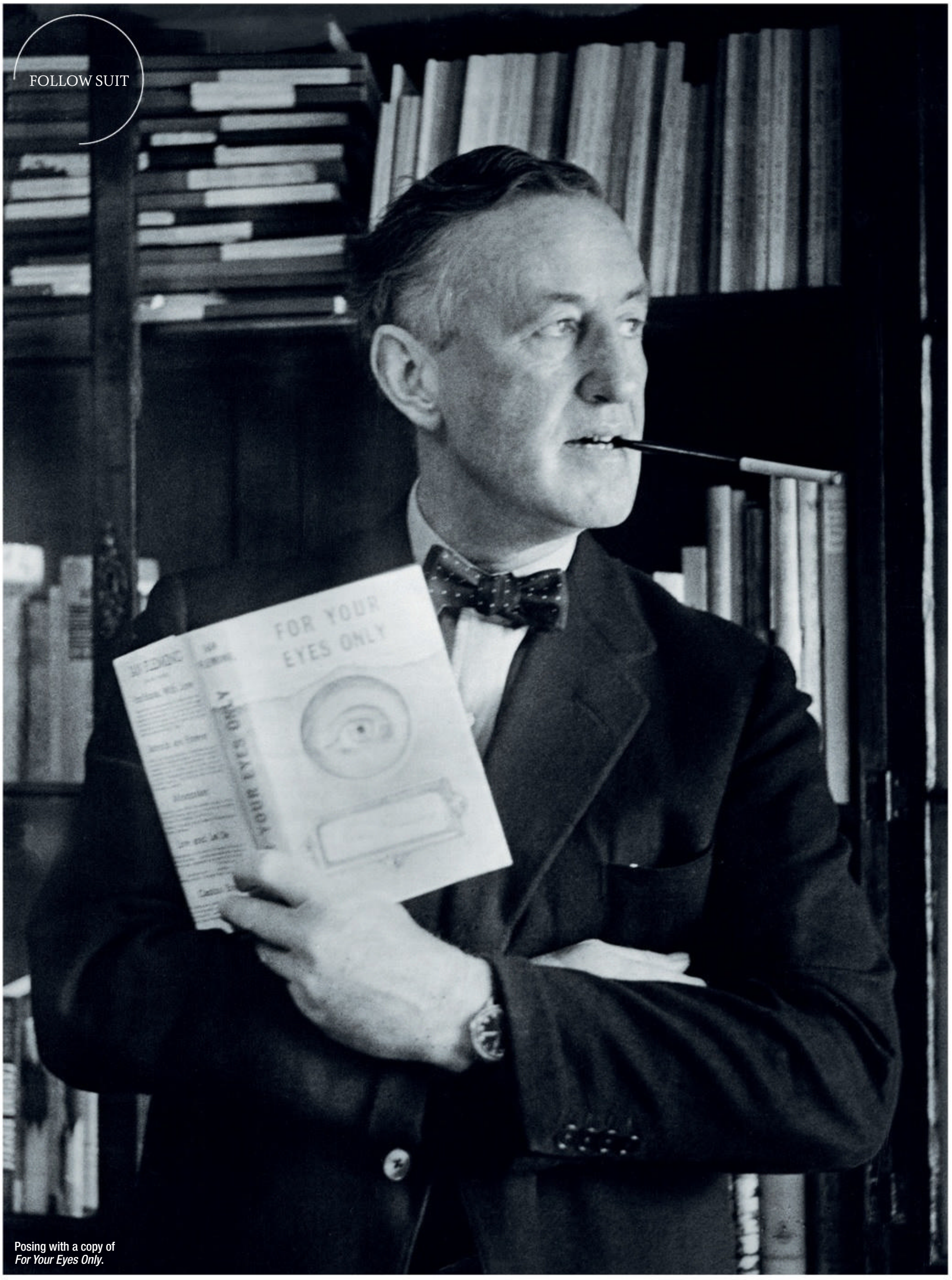


Bond, Fleming said, was "a compound of all the secret agents and commandos I met during the war", though 007's tastes were the author's own.

Fleming chats to Ursula Andress during the filming of *Dr. No*.



Posing with a copy of *For Your Eyes Only*.

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Fleming is played by the actor and musician Johnny Flynn with Roger Moore-ian suavity and an ever-lofted cigarette, representing the lieutenant commander's 80-a-day habit). An officer in Godfrey's service, quoted in Max Hastings' history *The Secret War*, said of Fleming: "His gift was much less for the analysis and the weighing of intelligence than for running things and drafting. He was a skilled fixer and a vigorous showman."

Both qualities were on display as the war ground on. Fleming accompanied Godfrey on several trips to the U.S., where he met William Donovan, the future head of the Office of Strategic Services, America's wartime intelligence agency; Fleming was asked to sketch out ideas for a permanent version, and essentially came up with a blueprint for the C.I.A. over the course of a weekend (Donovan was so impressed that he gifted Fleming a Colt revolver, "for special services").

He also established his own secret army, the 30 Assault Unit (30AU), or 'Fleming's Commandos' — "hard men, pirates and swashbucklers", according to Moran — who parachuted in ahead of Allied troop advances to gather Nazi intelligence. "He'd issue shopping lists," said Moran. "'You have two days to get a cipher machine or to get your hands on a prototype German submarine'... that kind of thing." Fleming, now a full commander, was forbidden to participate in the raids, but he later excelled in the training exercises he devised for potential U.S. intelligence operatives, swimming out to a vessel in Lake Ontario in full scuba gear to attach limpet mines (he was the only one to make it back undetected) and deploying his formidable urbanity to place a bomb in a power plant in Toronto. While his peers floundered with their sub-Stasi disguises and *Mission Impossible*-style stunts, Fleming simply picked up the phone to the director of the plant, told him he was considering buying the facility in an only slightly exaggerated cut-glass accent, put on his bespoke suit, buffed up his shoes, arrived at the meeting, placed his bomb in the toilet at an opportune moment, and returned triumphant.

Likewise, Fleming wouldn't demean himself with anything as *de trop* as waterboarding or thumbscrews when interrogating captured German naval officers; instead, he'd take them to his tailor (Benson, Perry & Whitley on Cork Street), get them fitted out in immaculate flannel, take them to Scott's of Mayfair, and ply them with oysters and fine wines until, suitably overcome by the largesse and the fineness of the super-120s weave, they would start singing like dapper canaries.

When interrogating German naval officers, he'd ply them with fine wines until they started singing like canaries.

All of which was grist to Fleming's mill when it came to his enduring post-war creation. Bond, Fleming said, was "a compound of all the secret agents and commandos I met during the war", though 007's tastes — for blondes, martinis, crisp tailoring, scrambled eggs, short-sleeved shirts, Rolex watches, and, not least, priapism ("No one I know had sex so much on the brain as Ian," said Mary Pakenham, an old girlfriend of Fleming's) — were the author's own.

Of the plots, on the other hand, he said: "I extracted them from my wartime memories, dolled them up, attached a hero and villain, and there was the book." Sometimes the references were mischievous (M, Bond's irascible overseer, shares Godfrey's rank and green baize-covered office door; Godfrey was neither amused nor flattered); sometimes a direct homage (in *Goldfinger*, it's revealed that Bond was part of a special commando unit that mimicked Fleming's 30AU); and sometimes a little too spooky for the spooks (in *From Russia with Love*, Bond steals what amounts to an Enigma machine in all but name from the Russian embassy in Istanbul; it wasn't until 1974, some 17 years after the book was published, that full details of what went on at Bletchley Park were disclosed).

So why, despite all evidence to the contrary, does Fleming remain consistently undervalued? Perhaps because, commando adventures aside, he never seemed to have to fight for anything. Think of him in his all-too-brief dotage (he died of pleurisy, aged 56, in 1964), rising early for a swim in the cove beneath Goldeneye, his idyllic Jamaican retreat, before typing out 2,000 words a day — three hours in the morning, an hour in the afternoon — and producing yet another lucrative Bond novel in two months. And with literary champions like Prince Philip, President Kennedy and the Broccolis, who needs the critics? Perhaps in the end, as Moran suggests, James Bond was simply a cover story for a dashing, debonair life that had its own brilliant substance as well as style. No more 'yes, buts' — Fleming would undoubtedly have demurred, but surely nobody, up to and including Bond, did it better.

‘THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS TO BE INNOVATIVE, NOT JUST DIFFERENT’

Bulgari’s Fabrizio Buonamassa Stigliani says he loves objects with a ‘very unique soul’. In a long-awaited conversation, he lets **THE RAKE** *into his creative process.*

by ***tom chamberlin***

This interview was meant to take place more than two years ago. Fabrizio Buonamassa Stigliani, the Bulgari Product Creation Executive Director, and I had been in talks to feature him in The Rake because, frankly, his omission from the magazine in years gone by was scandalous considering he is the most stylish man in the Swiss watch industry (a crowd in need of some Neapolitan swagger). So we were ready to go, and then something happened that kept everyone apart for 24 months. Now, on attempt number two, we managed to speak. In a way I am delighted it didn’t happen in 2020, as Fabrizio has, since then, managed to push new boundaries and realise further his unnerving genius and innovative brilliance, crowned by the release of the Octo Finissimo Ultra, the thinnest watch ever made.

It became clear that his well-deserved garlands are modestly held. We discussed the value of teamwork in the watch industry, the effect it has on his personal attitudes, and sartorial perfection.

I do not have the receipt for my creative process — it is the most difficult thing to explain. Ninety-nine per cent of my ideas come out of an emotion. You have two kinds of designers for my point of view. The first has a very emotional approach, you have an emotion from seeing a landscape, a particular object, smell, music, and you start to make sketches as your brain starts processing ideas. The second kind has more or less an analytic approach, so, ‘I have a brief, this is the needs of the market, this is the task’, and they start, like a puzzle, to put all the elements together. My approach is both, 70:30 respectively.

We create objects that people actually use, so it is useful to have information about the market and the needs of the client when you design something. It is also important to understand the needs of the market for which there is no data, and draws on your imagination to forecast where things will move around the world.

My greatest passion in life is to make sketches. When I have an idea in my brain, I start to make sketches, and this is a pure instinctive approach. I started to make sketches and I discovered comic books, and the amazing ability to tell stories through drawings. I never read the text, just the drawings and colours. My brain works for images and the emotions, but often the emotions come from the images. After that, my greatest passion is transportation designs, cars, motorcycles.

I started my career at the Fiat Group, and I started to design cars, thanks to my father, who worked for Hertz at the time. Now I make objects, watches, sunglasses, jewellery for Bulgari, but to be honest it is just an excuse to make another sketch.

I love objects with a very unique soul. Which is why I love strange objects, cars, watches. I am not obsessive about the price of the product but the soul. The most important thing is to be innovative, not just different. We see gentlemen who look different but not elegant, as he is fitting different elements together to be unique but it doesn’t make him elegant. The message behind the object is also crucial. If the message is interesting, one small innovation can make a huge difference if the message is clear.

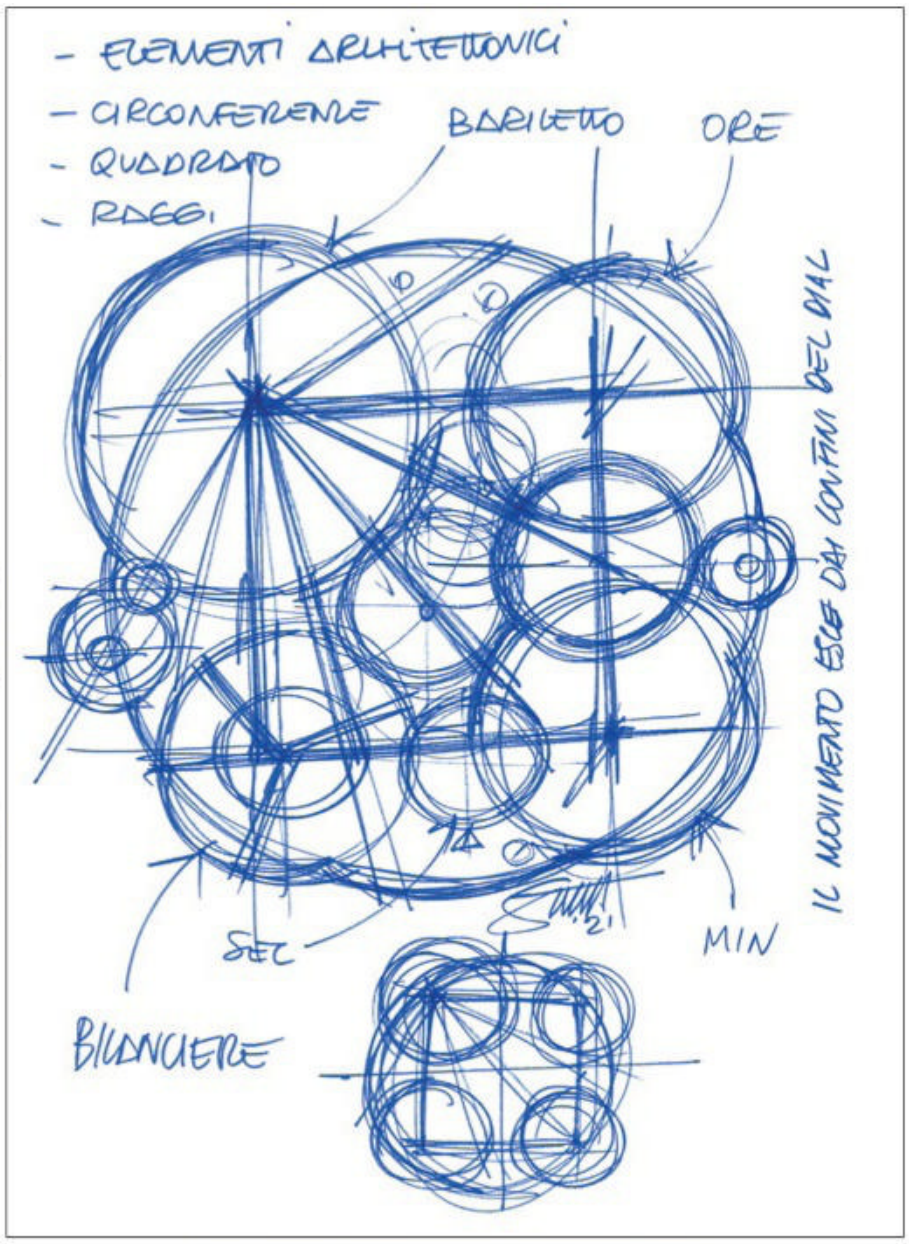
“A designer is a person who sometimes has a good idea or makes good sketches, but it is not a one-man show.”

Bulgari is a brand with watch masters and designers that work together from the beginning. That’s why we have a perpetual calendar with a very unique dial, because at the beginning the watch master asked me what movement I wanted to have. I said we should have huge date counters, so I suggested adding a retrograde function, and they made it.

A designer is a person who sometimes has a good idea or makes good sketches, but it is not a one-man show. If you don’t have the marketing teams, business development teams, the master watchmakers in the workshop, a sketch is just a sketch.

Bulgari is different because it plays with geometrical elements, plays with the roots of Italian design culture, it plays with the shapes and materials to create new aesthetics, and we have to thank Gianni Bulgari, as it is thanks to him that we have these aesthetics. All of our competitors come from Paris, but it is very important for us that our aesthetic is Roman and we are perceived as a brand that has come from Rome. It is part of the Italian design history.

FRANCESCO CABRAS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Opposite page: **Some of Fabrizio's sketches that led to the creation of the world's thinnest watch, the Bulgari Octo Finissimo Ultra (bottom right).**

This page: **Fabrizio sketches in his office at the Bulgari headquarters in Neuchâtel, Switzerland.**

I am not obsessed with putting my signature or stamp on every product we make. If you play with an iconic design, 99 per cent of the time it will go wrong. You just need to improve the quality sometimes, as after decades, technologies improve and materials improve but I don't want to touch the aesthetics. Shapes become old but the ideas are forever.

The mathematical approach to watchmaking is all about aesthetics. In Italy we call it *aesthetica di meccanica*. For us an engine has its own aesthetics that comes from performance, sound, shape. Watch movements are just like engines.

"Elegance is not something that must be strange or so evident; elegance is perfection of the understated."

The Octo Finissimo must be a modern complication that you have to wear every day. Hence the robust design, the bracelet, and, yes, it was all stemming from the Octo, which we designed 10 years ago. But in the end the approach was different; it has to be an ultra-thin watch that we wear every day.

After the Finissimo, many important and prestigious brands started making ultra-thin watches. What you don't want is people to not copy you. My tutor at university taught me that if people are looking at what you're doing and emulate it, then that's a very good sign.

I love all the most iconic Italian industrial designers, like Castiglioni, but the list is very long, and I love some designers from Germany, the U.S., Sweden. It is difficult to pick one master. I try to pick and choose different elements from different designers and different brands.

It is hard for me to name masters when it comes to industrial icons, it is easy for me to talk about masters when it comes to elegance. Italian actors like Marcello Mastroianni, Vittorio Gassman, Totò. Everyone knows Gianni Agnelli, but for him it was much more about extravagance. Pure elegance for me is not something that must be strange or so evident; elegance is perfection of the understated. I am obsessed with fabrics and details. I always wear jackets with certain proportions, always with patch-pockets. I came from Naples and I grew up with the images of my uncles, who were known in Naples for being so elegant.

Clothes should have perfect proportions but also be comfortable. I have jackets that I made 20 years ago. I still wear them, and the jacket and elements within grow old with you. This is what is so wonderful about tailoring.

THE OLDEST SEA DOG

Can you imagine a mutt so strong and capable that it will brave the foulest tempest to rescue a drowning man? The Portuguese Water Dog is at your service.

HOUND

by ***rodrigo*** *as told to* ***scott harper***

Mixed-breed mutts running into burning houses and emerging through the flames carrying bawling infants in their jaws; Golden Retrievers who wouldn't know Dr. Heimlich from Dr. Hook performing abdominal thrusts on owners choking on apples; and Beagles prodding 911 with their noses while their owners squint with tearful gratitude through diabetic-induced seizures… Dogs rescuing humans is now a well-established feel-good narrative meme, one that gets regular mawkish editorial treatment in the kind of women's glossies whose epilepsy-inducing covers promise cash-prize crosswords, ferry discounts and tales of auto-asphyxiation-based ménages à trois on the pages within.

My favourite mutt-saves-man yarn, though, is set not in modern-day suburbia but in late 13th-century Portugal. First told in a manuscript written by a Portuguese monk of that era, it involves a drowning sailor being saved by a dog with a "black coat, the hair long and rough, cut to the first rib and with a tail tuft". Can you imagine a dog so robust that it can brave a tempest foul enough to endanger the life of a man of the sea and drag that man to shore by its teeth? It certainly puts to shame the practice of doggy paddling to fetch a brightly coloured rubber bone from a waveless pond on a Sunday afternoon.

The sailor-saving pooch in question was one of my ancestors: a Portuguese Water Dog (*Cão de água*, or simply 'dog of water' in my native tongue), a breed closely related genetically to the poodle that has spent centuries helping our fishermen masters by herding cod, retrieving tackle that's gone adrift, and even couriering it from fleet ship to fleet ship. We've sailed from Costa de Prata on Portugal's Silver Coast to the much chillier waters off Iceland, our webbed feet, elongated bodies, muscular hindquarters and hard-as-nails temperaments making us willing and able to stay in the water — even the close-to-zero shores off Eskifjörður and Fáskrúðsfjörður — without a whimper of complaint. Legend has it that we served as couriers on board the Spanish Armada.

It was not for our biologically hardwired aquaphilia, though, that we came to the attention of Barack and Michelle Obama, as the couple set about appointing a resident White House canine in 2009, a tradition that was almost 130 years old by the time Trump threw it onto his bonfire of conventions that would later become an inferno. The Obamas chose two distant relatives of mine as pets — Bo, a gift from Senator Ted Kennedy, and later a step-sibling in the form of Sunny — for our breed's knack of hardly ever shedding our profuse, shaggy coats. How much their decision had to do with us being hypoallergenic and daughter Malia's asthma and how much to do with Barack's propensity to leave his best vicuña outerwear draped over the arms of White House sofas is anyone's guess.

GETTY IMAGES

Either way, the fact that he chose us, given the potentially discordant interplay between our delicate digestive systems and the pristineness of the White House lawn, was a decision that bestowed huge honour upon a sub-species that, but for the breeding efforts of a wealthy Portuguese businessman named Vasco Bensaúde in the 1930s, may have been forced into extinction by the increasingly sophisticated equipment available to Portuguese fishermen.

What an irony it would have been if the only canine creature that could possibly have survived the deluge myth, told within cultures all over the world since time immemorial, was to have become extinct due to the invention of steam-powered trawlers.

THE RAKE

Parmigiani Fleurier × *Revolution & The Rake*

TONDA PF MICRO-ROTOR “SERENISSIMA”

Our first collaboration with Parmigiani Fleurier features an elegant salmon dial in the minimalist Tonda PF case. Named “Serenissima” or in English, “serenity”, it is the perfect timepiece in that, thanks to its extraordinary ergonomics, it is blissful to wear.
From a design perspective, it is representative of an all-new sports chic icon — and with this colored dial, a beacon of joy, energy and triumph.

Featuring self-winding caliber PF703 with 48-hour power reserve; 40mm polished and satin-finished stainless steel with platinum knurled bezel; water resistant to 100m.

The watch is priced at CHF 21,450 and will be produced in a numbered and limited edition of 25 pieces.

WWW.THERAKE.COM

For enquiries, please email shop@therakemagazine.com

FREEDOM RIDER

In an extraordinary life, the Swedish–American model Paulina Porizkova has twice found herself cast as the victim of oppression. Twice she has prevailed.

by ***david smiedt***

If you had grown up in Sweden in the late 1960s and early seventies, you would have known the name Paulina Porizkova. It was a byword for a type of natural liberty denied a human being due to forces that Porizkova, specifically, was too young to oppose, let alone understand. For it was to Sweden that her anti–Soviet dissident parents fled from Czechoslovakia on a motorbike after the Warsaw Pact invasion of 1968.

Paulina was left with a grandmother, and Czech authorities refused a family reunification with such blockheaded vehemence that it caused two significant events. The first was that her mother felt she had no option but to make a kidnap attempt of her seven–year–old child. The second was that it failed but fomented such a *cause célèbre* that the Swedish statesman Olof Palme intervened, and the family was reunited in Sweden.

At 13, her picture somehow crossed the desk of the famed modelling scout John Casablancas, but only because it had been included in a stack of shots provided by a friend of Porizkova's who dreamed of being a make–up artist in Paris. Had her mate been a tad less ambitious, Porizkova might still be languishing in the smallest of type as a footnote in Swedish history.

Blossoming into ethereality, Porizkova exemplified a Slavic beauty that was at once raw but sophisticated and malleable, with cheekbones so high you'd need a safety harness. She was not so much the girl next door as the product of a sweaty–palmed focus group charged with imagineering the ultimate woman.

Although the spark was lit in Europe in the early 1980s, the fire took hold in the United States. At 18 she became the first Central European to land a *Sports Illustrated* Swimsuit Issue cover. Such was her impact, they asked her back the next year — only Christie Brinkley could boast the same.

But she wasn't mainlining only salt–licked sexiness. Porizkova could deliver editorially for the likes of *Vogue*, *Harper's*, *Elle* and *Cosmo*. Commercially, she was just as supercharged with Chanel, Versace, Hermès and Dior. She was such a compelling figure that in 1988, Estée Lauder simply had to have her as its exclusive beauty face, and shelled out a record $6m for the privilege. To put that in context, it was more than the combined budgets of *Rocky, Lost in Translation* and *Napoleon Dynamite*.

It was in 1984 that she met Ric Ocasek, the lead singer of the hit–machine band the Cars, on the set of the video for *Drive*. She was 19, he was 40, and so began a relationship that — on the surface, at least — defied expectations, probability, and the form guide of model/singer couplings. Their 1989 marriage lasted 28 years, produced two sons, and for all its apparent solidity played out in a 24–carat shitshow.

In September 2019 they were still sharing a home in New York, and Ocasek was recovering from surgery. Porizkova found him dead and soon suffered a second hammer blow. In scenes reminiscent of the soap opera *As the World Turns*, in which she clocked up five episodes, Porizkova found Ocasek had cut her out of his will. Page Six noted that he reportedly wrote, "I have made no provision for my wife … as we are in the process of divorcing. Even if I should die before our divorce is final … Paulina is not entitled to any elective share … because she has abandoned me." She responded with, "While my love for my husband was steady and my trust in him absolute, I was clearly delusional. I believed I knew him. I believed we had the same definition of 'love'. Grieving him is an equal amount of heartbreak and rage."

It turned out the relationship was as complex as it was coercive. On The Conversation with Amanda de Cadenet podcast, Porizkova revealed: "He didn't want me to do anything. He didn't want me to go anywhere. He wanted me to be within his circle at all times. I was his soul emotional provider for everything, and I confused that with love." Noting that at times she felt more like "treasured possession" than human being during the relationship, she added: "It was a collective thing that just stuck with me forever, and I still feel that way, which, of course, is remarkable then that me, self–proclaimed feminist, goes and marries a guy who tells her how to dress."

That's not to say she was a Moravian eagle in a gilded cage. Over the years, there were several seasons as a judge on *America's Next Top Model* (she replaced Twiggy), a children's book, and several film projects. But it was after Ocasek's death that Porizkova, bruised but defiant, rewrote her own legend.

One part of the process was a short but by all accounts rewarding relationship with *West Wing* and *Being the Ricardos* writer Aaron Sorkin. "He helped heal me and reclaim myself," she has said. Another step was her participation in the adventure–reality T.V. show *Beyond the Edge*, where celebrities compete in 'adventures' in the jungles of Panama to raise money for charities of their choice. She said of the experience, "Being on camera with no make–up, no flattering lights, no attempts at 'looking good', faced me with having to see myself as I am, unvarnished. My initial recoiling of seeing myself so bare, so vulnerable, so 'older' looking, has turned into something else. Freedom."

Her voice has become more strident in recent months. Speaking to *People (The TV Show!)* — a title that should have its punctuation licence revoked — she declared: "Overall, as a person, I'm the best I've ever been. So I'm not ready to be dismissed. You don't get to dismiss me because I have some wrinkles and sags and grey hair now, when I'm kind of fabulous, the most fabulous I've ever been. In fact, I'm going to just put it out there and go, You know what, this is me at my best. Deal with it!"

In other words, she has finally seized a type of natural liberty denied a human being due to forces she was once too young to oppose, let alone understand.

SHUTTERSTOCK

RIKESH CHAUHAN

atelier

INVESTMENT HANKER; NO JUNK IN THE TRUNK; **NEW NEW & LINGWOOD.**

INVEST

Investments can be unpredictable, but not so with these four winners, which we have handpicked to provide you with sound and secure appreciation — aesthetically, spiritually and financially.

by ***scott harper & justin hast***

Asprey & Bugatti 24k rose-gold La Voiture Noire sculpture

They've held a royal warrant since 1862. They've helped bring Art Deco design values north of La Manche. They're the official jewellery sponsors of the Baftas, their wares have appeared in endless box-office smashes, and they even made the Henri Delaunay trophy held aloft by Italy as winners of last summer's European Championship. Oh, and Prince William has played for their polo team. If ever there has been a luxury brand that refuses to rest on its laurels, though, it is Asprey.

Asprey have been a prolific collaborator for decades. The only known Patek Philippe watch to namecheck the retailer on the dial bears Asprey's moniker, while a much more recent joint effort with Formula One saw the re-creation of silver racing cars and other motorsport artefacts. Asprey have perhaps found their ultimate creative partner, though, in Bugatti, a company whose eponymous founder, Ettore, was born into "a family of artists who just happened to end up making cars", as one British broadsheet put it (his father, Carlo, was a furniture and jewellery designer; his brother, Rembrandt — not that one — an animalier whose sculptures now sell for millions).

The fruits of this extraordinary collaboration? Initially, 261 small sterling-silver sculptures of the French marque's La Voiture Noire (the number is a nod to the fastest speed, in miles per hour, the hypercar has reached), each of which came with their own artwork-linked NFT, accessed via a QR code. Maybe it was the allure of La Voiture Noire's seductive contours being rendered in precious metal; maybe it was the exquisite bases, in the two brands' signature colours, on which the sculptures are mounted; maybe it was the heirloom factor inherent in being able to prove provenance and ownership using a unique serial identifier, but they sold out before the mint date and are now reaching up to five times their original value on the secondary market.

The good news is that at the end of June, those who missed out can claim possibly the biggest bragging rights in objet d'art history over those who didn't, by acquiring a limited edition of one version of the sculpture, handmade in 24k rose-gold, its base bearing the signatures of both Bugatti and Asprey.

This isn't just an investment in a mantelpiece conversation piece, it's a symbol of a luxury world rooted in scarcity adapting to a digital landscape whose core trait is replication. Luxury historians of the future will consider you to have acquired a major milestone in the history of premium goods consumption. *SH*

www.asprey.com

Breguet Marine Hora Mundi ref. 5557

The inaugural Watches and Wonders show was held in Geneva this year. For the first time ever, Rolex, Patek and LVMH lined up alongside the Richemont group. It was a righteous celebration of unified horology — think group wrist shots and hashtags. There was, however, one obvious omission: Swatch Group.

The key strategic play now, with brands dropping new releases across the year, is to get a few shots in early. Swatch did just that the week before Watches and Wonders with one of the most remarkable launches we have ever seen, with the MoonSwatch. But let's not go there — that's a long story for another time. What we have here is a haute-horology sports watch like no other. When you think of Breguet you would be forgiven for thinking of engine-turned dials, modest case sizes, and fine finishing. The watch on this page is a new iteration of the much-loved Hora Mundi, this time in Breguet Marine.

The Hora Mundi became an instant hit at the time of its launch in the Classique collection (a dressier vibe). The Hora Mundi complication took three years to develop and has been awarded four patents. Its instant-change dual-time display is a game changer when it comes to international travel. This technical feat is accomplished via the pusher and crown. Having selected the first city's time and date, the owner of the watch need only set the second city. The watch mechanism then calculates the time and date by means of a clever system of cams, hammers, and an integrated differential. At that point, simply pressing the pusher is enough to travel from one end of the planet to the other, all without disturbing the accurate running of the watch.

It is available in 18ct white-gold or 18ct rose-gold, and measures 43.9mm in diameter. With a thickness of 13.8mm, it is no under-the-cuff dress watch. It is powered by the automatic Breguet calibre 77F1 with 40 jewels and equipped with an 18ct gold rotor. The movement provides a power reserve of 55 hours when wound.

The dial offers an elegant interpretation of the world on the wrist via a play on materials and superimposed plates. On the first gold base, the hand-guilloché waves lap gently against the shores of the continents. The sunburst dial base, attired in abyssal blue, creates the impression of a permanent waltz of the wave motifs. An additional plate made of sapphire is composed of the metallised meridians and the continents are treated to horizontal satin brushing, while their coastlines are subtly outlined with a metallic turquoise border. Finally, an outer flange serves as a support for the various elements present on the dial. The result features brilliantly crafted dimensions and surfaces thanks to various treatments requiring several weeks of work. It is also good to know the watch is water resistant to 100 metres — we wouldn't want any problems from dive-bombing off that 150 footer in the Med. *JH*

www.breguet.com

Purdey Hanning dry wax jacket

The retail emporium on the corner of Purdey & Sons' South Audley Street premises in Mayfair is something of a curiosity shop, a place where knives and other accessories for budding falconers sit alongside staghorn whistle thumbsticks, Swarovski scopes for surveying the landscape while stalking in the Scottish Highlands, and — our favourite piece — a marquetry cigar humidor, made from 48 different types of wood, that doubles as a model of the building in which you're standing (it even has the world war II bomb damage to the entrance pillars).

It shouldn't be forgotten, though, that Purdey — one of the most renowned makers of sporting shotguns and rifles — are also purveyors of outdoor pursuits apparel. Pieces such as this wax jacket, which has been crafted specifically with the summer months in mind. For those unfamiliar with the 'dry' part of this sartorial genre, let's start with the wax jacket's backstory. It was invented in the 18th century in Scotland by a company called Francis Webster Limited, who would infuse the cloth with linseed oil. Supple, comfortable and water resistant, the British Navy and the crew of early tea clippers soon caught on to wax jackets' practical appeal.

An alternative to the paraffin or natural beeswax often used today, dry wax is a relatively new innovation, which, unlike traditional outerwear designed to keep the wearer warm and dry during rural endeavours such as hunting, shooting and fishing, is dry to the touch, so it doesn't have that slightly dank feel that tempts the uninitiated to drape it over the nearest radiator.

The appeal here goes beyond tactility. Made from woven cotton in a subtle herringbone pattern, the piece has a wind-cheating showerproof outer shell, but remains lightweight and, being only half-lined, offers excellent manoeuvrability. Hunting-inspired design details include quilted shoulder patches, a storm cuff neck and the kind of voluminous pockets that have become synonymous with bucolic weekend pastimes. Handily, it also offers side entry to the lower pockets and a double-ended zip.

One's inner vanity needn't be left behind in the metropolis, of course, and this garment is made more stylish by back vents, an adjustable cord at the waist, horn buttons and, most importantly, the fabric's tendency to crease naturally over time, making for a distressed, lived-in look.

All in all, it is an investment that will come to represent your own personal comfort when leaving town for the weekend. *SH*

www.purdey.com

Montblanc's Meisterstück duffle bag

Those who subscribe, in a literal sense, to the old adage that states 'the pen is mightier than the sword' are likely to be dedicated patrons of a Hamburg-based brand whose Meisterstück (or 'masterpiece') sits at the apex of luxury writing instruments. A lesser-known adage, meanwhile — much lesser known, in fact, as we've just made it up — is, 'the duffle bag is mightier than the suitcase'. And those who adhere to both might well consider Montblanc's Meisterstück duffle bag their most emotionally rewarding investment of the summer.

Duffle bags are named after the Belgian town in which the sturdy cloth was made to create the earliest produced cylindrical carrying vessels, in the mid 17th century. Since then they've played a crucial role in world war II (during which the 'doughboy' duffle became critical for the transportation of weaponry and equipment) as well as military and civilian marine culture, including the surf scenes of 1950s California and eastern Australia.

Like every garment, watch or style asset you own, the duffle bag evolved from its functional origins, and today they're popular with debonair, seasoned travellers for a number of reasons. Their flexible structure means they're easier to pack with, and generous with small spaces to wedge smaller items into when supposedly full. Their pliability also makes getting them into tight overhead spaces on planes slightly less like an arm-tiring game of Tetris. Above all, though, if you choose the right one they are unerringly stylish, giving off the air of the casual itinerant rather than the purposeful itinerary slave: more Muddy Waters' moss-eschewing rolling stone, less starchy commuter on the London City-Geneva return grind.

The Meisterstück duffle — as you may have guessed from the name — is a tribute to a writing instrument the brand has been making since 1924. The nod to artful penmanship doesn't stop there: the bag's stitching, zip pullers and handles all echo the design language of Montblanc's iconic pen nibs. Crafted, naturally, with the same unerring artisanal diligence that Montblanc apply to their pens, watches and jewellery, it comes in deep-shine, soft-grain black leather, and offers lock-and-key closure.

The pen/sword aphorism was coined by the English author Edward Bulwer-Lytton in 1839, and alludes more broadly, of course, to thoughtful communication being the most effective tool for human progression. Stylistic expression being a form of communication, this is a purchase that packs a poetic punch. *SH*

www.montblanc.com

TRUNK SHOW

Merino wool isn't a fabric reserved for suiting. It has gained a reputation as a hot-weather hero, which is why Vilebrequin and the Woolmark Company have worked on a collaboration that brings sartorialism and sustainability to beach life.

by ***josh bozin***

For more than 50 years, Vilebrequin have been celebrating the spirit of summer with their famed European-style swim short. The secrets to the brand's longevity? Perhaps the joy, freedom and confidence one feels when wearing a pair of Vilebrequin swim shorts. That, and a fierce obsession with durable, high-quality tailoring you can holiday in for a lifetime. Tailored for the waters and inspired by the seductive charm of Saint-Tropez, this French swimwear label has made style paramount in all of its designs since 1971.

Nevertheless, this summer's dress code is set to look a little different to previous years: enter a summer-first swim short that is both sartorial and sustainable.

In collaboration with the Woolmark Company, Vilebrequin have launched their first Merino boardshort for the spring-summer '22 season. Certified by the Woolmark Company, this new men's swimwear capsule offers an insight into forward-thinking swimwear design that is sartorially minded and sustainable. It's also a playful spin on swimsuit tailoring.

"We [Vilebrequin] were brainstorming internally about how to push the boundaries of swimwear further than ever before; we wanted to design a real swimming costume, literally," says Roland Herlory, Vilebrequin's Chief Executive. "The Woolmark Company naturally became the perfect partner. We started the conversation a few years ago and we took the time to develop the ideal capsule collection.

"It took several years to develop the perfect product. In terms of design, we wanted to stick to the sartorial elegance with timeless colours, selecting navy, light grey, and classic gingham. But the driving force for this capsule was placing innovation and sustainability at the heart of our collaboration; that, and elegance, was key."

Fusing 50 years of tailoring prowess with an endless flair for experimentation, the new Vilebrequin swim short is the result of serious technical know-how, drawing on traditional suiting methods for everything from weaving to pattern cutting to pocket placement. Each pair of trunks is thoughtful and considered, demanding an average of 32 steps until completion. The outcome is a bespoke fit and engineering that will ensure lifelong wear.

At the heart of the new collection lies its unique fabrication: Merino wool. Ultra-breathable, moisture-wicking and thermo-regulating, Merino wool isn't just a fabric reserved for suiting, it is also gaining a reputation as a hot-weather hero.

In terms of sustainability, wool is the original eco-fibre. It is 100 per cent natural, biodegradable and renewable, with sheep producing new fleece every year. It has all that's required to create a premium luxury fabric, and the fashion industry is taking note. Switching to a natural, high-quality fibre (such as wool, linen or organic cotton) isn't for style or show. It's a matter of survival, and brands like Vilebrequin are pledging to act now to ensure the future of the environment. "Merino wool is a real source of eco-innovation, and perfectly in line with Vilebrequin's target to create 80 per cent of collections using exclusively sustainable fabrics and processes by 2023," Herlory says.

> **"Our studios played into the idea of a 'suit made for swimming', letting the quality of Merino wool shine through."**

"Partnering with the Woolmark Company has introduced us to cutting-edge techniques that reduce our impact on the planet while delivering a uniquely elegant product. Sustainability-driven fabrics and process will infuse all our next collaborations."

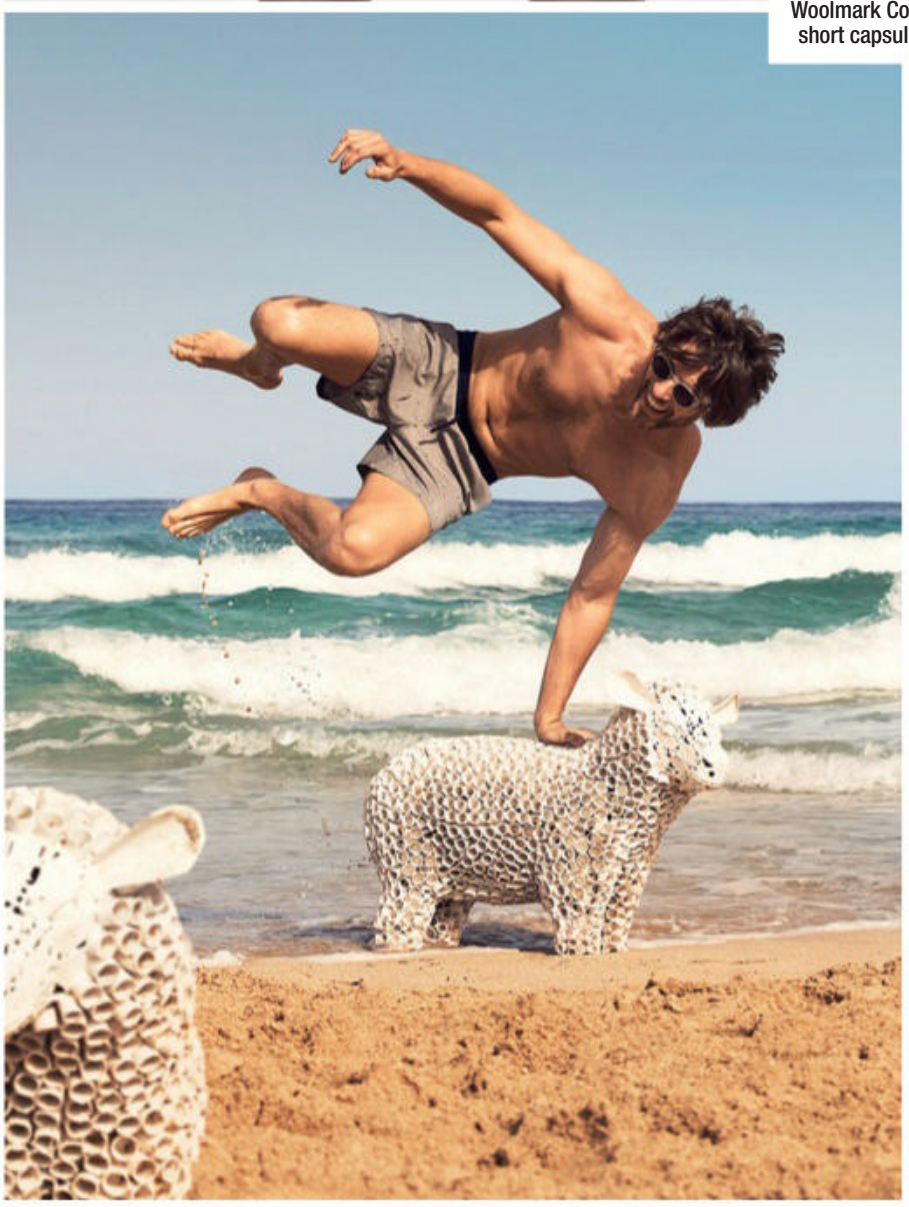
Taking the road less travelled (in all aspects of this collaboration), the Vilebrequin x the Woolmark Company capsule collection will feature three swim shorts that emphasise a sartorial point of view. Navy, light grey and classic gingham are the colourways available, and they come without a print, bright colour or turtle in sight (a notion foreign to Vilebrequin's previous design codes). "Our studios played into the idea of a 'suit made for swimming', letting the quality and technical attributes of Woolmark-certified Super 120s Merino wool from our friends at REDA really shine through," Herlory says.

"Choosing non-mulesed Merino wool from REDA's Active collection, our swim shorts are a true celebration of Italian know-how mixed with wool and performance."

The unique properties of Merino wool also denote a longer lifespan for garments. That, coupled with the quality and softness of Australian Merino wool — something few other textiles can deliver — result in a brilliant pair of tailored swim shorts that meet every level of Vilebrequin's standards for elegance, performance and the environment.

"The Vilebrequin x Woolmark Merino wool swim shorts highlight the true versatility of the fibre," says John Roberts,

The Vilebrequin x the Woolmark Company swim short capsule collection.



the C.E.O. of Australian Wool Innovation, the parent company of the Woolmark Company.

"Soft next to skin but resistant enough to handle the ocean, Merino wool continues to drive unexpected product offerings. Thanks to manufacturing techniques, Vilebrequin is redefining the way we wear wool by bringing the sophistication of worsted tailoring to the water."

The question at the heart of this collaboration, however, involves the swim-test: how does Merino wool hold up in water? Exceptionally well, believe it or not. Worsted Merino wool fibres form a naturally water-friendly, quick-drying shell, especially when woven at higher densities.

"Australian Merino wool has a range of natural qualities, including softness next to skin, breathability and thermoregulation," says Damien Pommeret, Woolmark's Regional Manager for Western Europe. "It's also the world's most technical performance fibre, meaning it is perfect for sports and outdoors. The Woolmark Company supports brands to learn more about wool's natural eco-credentials and benefits for the circular economy. In contrast to synthetic fibres, wool fits into a sustainable circular model that minimises waste and pollution. Wool has a unique set of features, such as being natural, renewable, biodegradable and micro-plastic free."

Vilebrequin x the Woolmark Company swim short capsule collection is available in Vilebrequin stores and at vilebrequin.com from May 2022

New & Lingwood C.E.O. Freddie Briance outside their recently-opened shop on Chiltern Street.

NEW LEASE ON LIFE

The classic British outfitters New & Lingwood have opened a concept store in one of London's most desirable neighbourhoods. The brand's Chief Executive, Freddie Briance, shows **THE RAKE** *around and tells us what we can expect…*

by ***charlie thomas*** *photography* ***rikesh chauhan***

New & Lingwood possess a gravitas that most companies can only dream of. The heritage brand has been around since 1865, survived the first world war, had its flagship destroyed during the second, and has dressed the scholars of Eton for more than 150 years. It remains a classic outfitter that offers a broad range, from English-made socks and the finest silk dressing gowns to eveningwear, unstructured casual tailoring and an unrivalled selection of casualwear. In short, it's one of the most respected names in the world of classic style.

Draw up a list of the oldest, most cherished brands in Britain, though, and it likely won't be the first name that comes to mind. Its customers like it like that, often referring to it as "their best-kept secret", as the Chief Executive, Freddie Briance, tells *The Rake*. But in today's menswear landscape, it's not enough to hang on to the coat-tails of history, and to be a sustainable business it's important to move forward while simultaneously respecting the past. Which is why New & Lingwood have just opened the doors of their latest store, at London's most stylish address: Chiltern Street in Marylebone.

"The joy of Jermyn Street is that it's like an emporium… things coming out of every corner, a lot of stimulation."

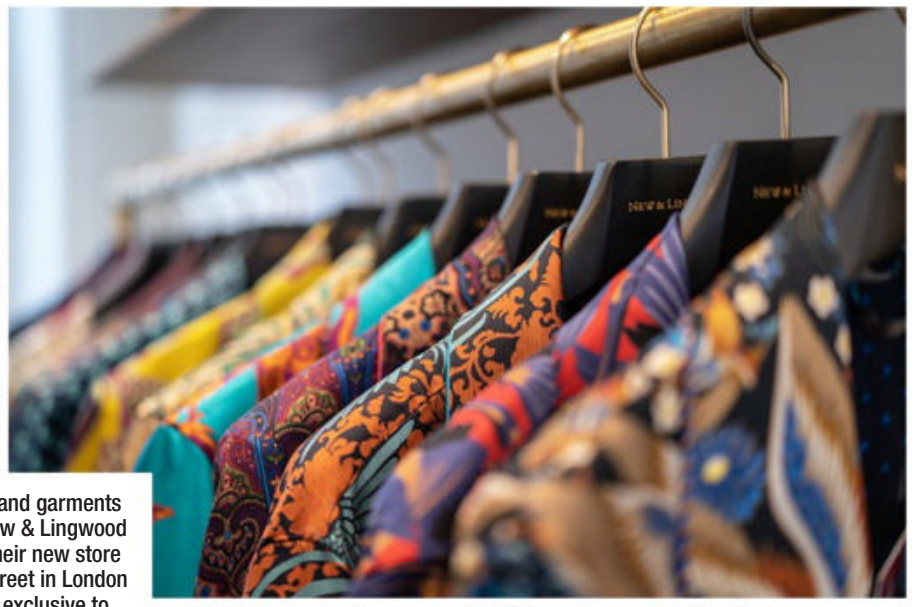
"What we wanted to do is have a space that could be a concentrated reflection of the brand," Briance says. "We want to show a lot more of our seasonal collection and not so much of the evergreen stuff people come to us for day in, day out. It's more of a concept store. So over the next six or seven months you'll see new concepts launch here first. It's important to make sure it's elevated enough to connect to Jermyn Street, but we wanted to express different ideas here."

The store is certainly different to what we've come to expect from one of the U.K.'s oldest menswear brands. On the warm April afternoon I meet Freddie, London is at its best, with the tables of Chiltern Firehouse spilling out onto the street opposite the store. People chat and eat lunch over a glass of wine before strolling along wide pavements from which beautiful redbrick Victorian mansions rise high. Lined with independent stores, the street is relaxed, boasting a neighbourhood feel that's rare in central London. New & Lingwood's shop fits right in. The decor is light, airy and welcoming, with clean white walls, minimal brass hanging rails, gracefully worn parquet flooring, and black-and-white prints from the nearby Atlas Gallery. It invites you to explore the curated selection of clothing or to simply hang out — there's even a barbershop downstairs run by Jay Anaya, a veteran who's been cutting hair on the street for years. It's a far cry from New & Lingwood's Jermyn Street store, but that's exactly the point.

"This is a neighbourhood store, so we wanted it to reflect the neighbourhood and be in keeping with what's going on while also infusing our character into it," Briance says. "We want to make sure that each store we open reflects the area and has a slightly different feel to it. It gives people a very directional taster of the brand. When you come to a brand that's got 150 years of history and has naturally picked up lots of different bits over its time, it's quite hard to focus on something that can easily be understood. What this allows us to do is exactly that. The colour palettes can be really easily understood, the product ranges can be easily understood, but then there's tasters of wider pieces. It's a collection of smaller stories that can be explored further in Jermyn Street."

For anyone who hasn't visited, the Jermyn Street store is certainly a place to be explored. An array of colour strikes you as you walk through its doors on the corner of the historic Piccadilly Arcade. "It's quite full-on," Briance says. "A lot of the joy of Jermyn Street is that it's like an emporium. You've got things coming out of every corner and there's a lot of stimulation there."

Like a candy shop for classicists, the decadent lashings of dark wood, tartan carpets and Victorian signage practically demand you leave with at least one of the brand's opulent, printed silk gowns. It also serves a purpose, and one that is crucial to the brand's success, according to Briance. "We have products you need to touch," he says. "There's always going to be a space for digital, to introduce people to the brand who aren't able to get to the physical spaces, but there's a really special feeling you get when you touch our fabrics and put on



Accessories and garments familiar to New & Lingwood fans but in their new store on Chiltern Street in London Downstairs exclusive to the Chiltern Street store, Barbour Jay Anaya offers customers an intimate barber experience.

At the Jermyn Street emporium, the original New & Lingwood London store showcasing loungewear, ready to wear, made to measure and accessories. New & Lingwood's silk pins, alongside silk knitwear and eveningwear inside the Jermyn street store.

one of our dressing gowns for the first time. It's the transportive nature of our products. In here you get an idea of how they fit, how they feel, what the quality is, the attention to detail."

New & Lingwood's commitment to Jermyn Street extends beyond a mere store presence. Since last year the brand has started making at a workshop below the store, allowing for more dynamic production with its made-to-measure service. "If you're going to be a heritage, historical tailor, you need to ensure you're making things to the highest level and own that craft. So since last summer we've started crafting dressing gowns in our new atelier, just under the store. That's a big part of what we want to do. British manufacturing, London manufacturing... If someone comes to a tailor, they want that garment to be theirs. You want it to be personalised. The goal is to say, 'What do you want?', and for us to be able to offer it. By making things in Jermyn Street, we can also be a lot faster and have a lot more control over the quality."

So what's the next step for New & Lingwood? A heavier investment in bricks and mortar, perhaps, or a revamp of its product offering? The answer, refreshingly, is straightforward. Briance says: "Each shop we deliberate over for a really long time, making sure it's in keeping with what we offer and that our customers from Jermyn Street won't feel alienated. We don't want to expand for expansion's sake; that's not what we're trying to do. We're trying to get to a stage where we can bring the brand to people who want to find it. That's the same thing with our product development as well. Ultimately, we want to provide people with what they want. That's the joy of what tailors are, that's just what they do."

CHARLIE GRAY

articles

RULES FOR A MOON KNIGHT; GOING ON THE ACAPULCO; **FULL WOOL JACKET;** SAFFER FOR YOUR ART; **NO RAIN IN SPAIN.**

EYE OF THE HAWKE

More than 30 years after a raw and fresh-faced Ethan Hawke made his screen breakthrough in Dead Poets Society, we are still watching him like — well, like the proverbial. He gives **TOM CHAMBERLIN** *the three keys to his success...*

photography **charlie gray** *fashion direction* **grace gilfeather**

The music starts slowly, with a resonant B-flat from a distant dulcimer, like a mental lightbulb coming on for the virginal, repressed schoolboy Todd Anderson, soon to become a man. A crescendo marks the trigger-pulling of the rebellion. Not by manning the barricades, but by *carpe*-ing the *diem* and climbing with scruffy shoe onto the creaky and ancient wooden desk to say with his best (though still underwhelming) barbaric yawp, "O Captain! My Captain!" It is a knowing valediction to the departing mentor, Mr. Keating, who stops and observes half the class joining in this acknowledgement, led by the emboldened character played by Ethan Hawke at the denouement of Peter Weir's *Dead Poets Society* — and the dawn of Hawke's career.

In 2022, Hawke's light still shines and his trip is not yet done. We speak to him while he has three projects ready for release or already showing, from movies to Marvel series. His is a career best known for screen performances, but he has many credits from treading the boards, too, spanning more than three decades since *Dead Poets Society* and including four Oscar nominations and, finally, one cover of *The Rake* with his (almost) namesake bird of prey. When we opened our Zoom conversation he did that disarmingly charming thing, which I often forget to do: he complimented my office surroundings and dispelled any potential awkwardness. Hawke is intensely thoughtful: he doesn't waffle but considers his answers and plays with a straight bat. I will leave you to judge, dear reader, if he kept it up in our conversation, but from where I was sitting, I feel I know what the answer is.

Arguably, he had a head start in making *Dead Poets Society*. He was, at the time, an acting student at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, but prior to that he had been at the prestigious Hun School, a boy's boarding school that contained echoes of Welton Academy, the fictional school in which the film is set. This surely helped pave the way for his long-desired career. Hawke says: "Some agent I had met said they were looking for young kids around my age, and she sent the script and I read it and knew that world so well that I remember I called my sister and said, 'You know what, I am going to leave school and audition for this movie and if I don't get a part in it then I am not an actor', because I knew the world and those people so well I felt I could play any one of those parts. If I know anything then I know this world."

It's no spoiler to tell you he got the role and was lined up alongside fledgling young actors and industry greats, including the much-missed Robin Williams. He found himself sparring (artistically speaking) with Williams on a few occasions, especially when it came to the comic titan's capacity to improvise and try something new in each take. Ethan has mentioned before that he had trouble maintaining a straight face on set; I wanted to know if this was a character choice or an intention to be seen, on set, as a serious actor. It was both, he says: "I just didn't think [the character of] Todd would laugh. I thought my job would be to be the person in the room who didn't laugh. In every team there is a position you play, and the goalie's job is different to the right wing. What Robin needed was somebody not to laugh. I was trying to play my position."

"I was such a fan of acting. I knew that to do it well, I couldn't have an ordinary relationship with it."

As you can see, although Hawke was as green as it gets, the elite character actor was in him from the start. "The wonderful thing about being young is that you don't have any experience but you do have idealism," he says. "I was such a fan of acting. I had read all these interviews with Sean Penn, Robert De Niro, John Malkovich, different people I admired, and they spoke with such ferocity and they took their work so seriously. And the arts are a funny thing to take seriously, as it's kind of a joke. When you work with someone like Simon Russell Beale, the guy takes it seriously, so when you work with him you think, It's not an accident that he's extremely successful, he's a brilliant mind who is dedicated to his field. I was young enough to know that to do this well, I couldn't have an ordinary relationship with it, and if I did then I wouldn't have a chance at excelling at doing the thing I love. So a little bit of that is trying to harness madness. It is not sane to practise the saxophone eight hours a day, but you're never going to be Charlie Parker if you don't."

Screen-actor interviews aside, Ethan has a definite Anglophilic view of acting as a craft, admiring the approach taken by the British, which puts great emphasis on the stage and doing your 10,000 hours. He says: "What I felt from a very young age was that in America the goal is somehow to 'make it' — there is a culture of personality around the talent

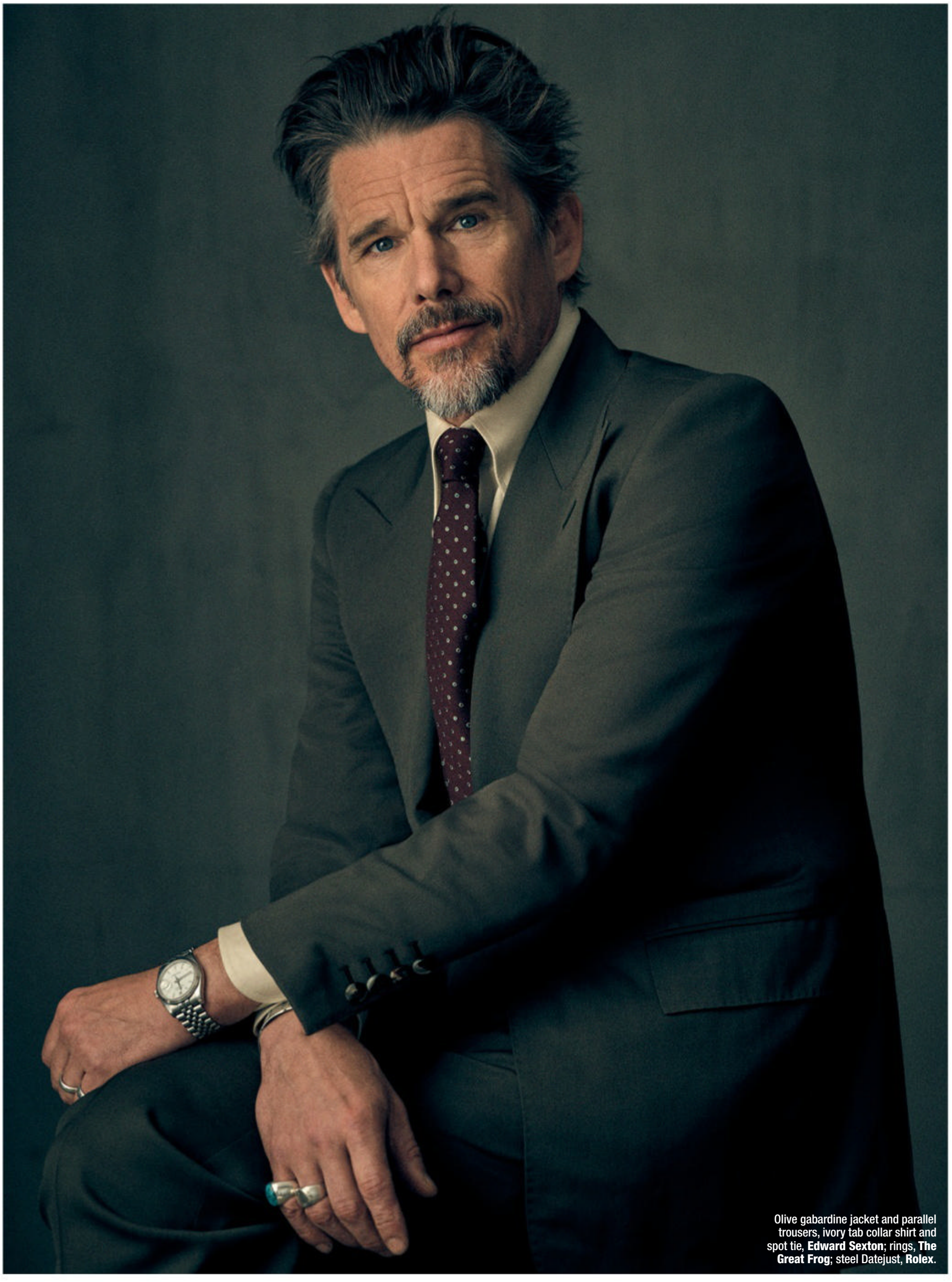
Section opener:
Herringbone Donegal coat, **Private White V.C.**

Opening spread:
Leather western shirt, **Ralph Lauren Purple Label**; cotton vest, **Sunspel**; silver chain necklace, **The Great Frog**; Louisiana fedora, **Lock & Co.**

This page:
Leather western shirt, **Ralph Lauren Purple Label**; pleated trousers, **Dolce Gabbana**; Louisiana fedora, **Lock & Co**; Cash black leather boots, **Barbanera**; jewellery, **The Great Frog**; *belt, stylist's own.*

“I want to make a movie that is good enough that it would be studied in class. There is an arrogance to say that, but if you don’t think it somewhere in your heart, it is definitely not going to be.”

Suede overshirt, **Ralph Lauren Purple Label**; jeans, **Polo Ralph Lauren**; Cash black leather boots, **Barbanera**; steel Datejust, **Rolex**.



Olive gabardine jacket and parallel trousers, ivory tab collar shirt and spot tie, **Edward Sexton**; rings, **The Great Frog**; steel Datejust, **Rolex**.

myth, whether you've got it, and if you do you'll be discovered somewhere along the road. England, in my experience, there is such a culture of mentorship, of education, of treating this like a craft. Yeah, you might be successful young, but that doesn't mean you're an actor. But Judi Dench is an actor, John Gielgud is an actor. The reason Denzel Washington has excelled for the period he has is that he trained himself along the British theatre model; there are few card-carrying movie stars in America that have a passion for the theatre. I think the theatre is incredibly humbling, whereas Hollywood, and the art of making movies, fans the flames of your ego to such an extent that if you get it too young it is very destructive to your approach to craft, because you're told you have it. That sensibility is destructive to a lot of young American actors."

There is an element of hindsight here, and a heavy dose of learn-by-doing, by Hawke's admission. "When I was young, every opportunity was so important," he says. "What happens is you get a little beat up when you pour yourself into something that is really poorly shot or poorly edited. I didn't realise that in *Dead Poets Society* — where the cinematographer was John Seale and the director was Peter Weir, the script won the Oscar — that I was working with a really high level of people. I thought that is what the movie business was like. I didn't know how rare Peter Weir was."

From that point he found a rhythm that would keep him working through most of his professional life. His appearance in 1994's *Reality Bites* turned him from awkward pupil to teen heart-throb. The following year would see him become a romantic lead, as he began his pas de deux with Richard Linklater in *Before Sunrise*. The collaborations between him and Linklater have this recurring theme of time passing, growing up, growing older, life playing out on life's terms. They did this by creating films that involved the same people over many years. There would be two more films in the series, *Before Sunset* and *Before Midnight*.

While the latter two were being filmed, he began another major project with Linklater, the critically acclaimed *Boyhood*, a film that told the story of a family over 12 years, with the same actors throughout. "They were gigantic undertakings," he says. "We shot *Before Sunset* and *Before Midnight* while we were shooting *Boyhood* — that was a great decade of working together. Do I think we are simpatico? Yes, I felt that from the first night I met him. He doesn't turn movies into an advertisement, he always accepts life for what it is, and I always wanted to do that as an actor. Life doesn't need to be hyperbolised, life really is magnificent. He loves these characters, even if they are flawed, and he doesn't need to make life better than it is in order to be cinematic. Growing old with a woman is magic if you capture it right."

Boyhood was a huge success by whatever metric you use to judge such things. The reviews, awards and box office numbers all reflected a reverence for the unprecedented cinematic effort and gumption required to make such a film, the type that our cover star is fond of. "I believe in 'fortune favours the bold'," he says. "When Linklater came to me and said, 'I want to make a movie and shoot a short film once a year for 12 years', that has balls, you can't sign a contract for that. Who is going to finance that? What makes you think the actors will like you in four years let alone 12?"

"Hollywood fans the flames of your ego to such an extent that if you get it too young, it is very destructive... "

This marathon had water breaks that allowed Hawke to do other work, which included Antoine Fuqua's *Training Day*, alongside Washington. It is a film that departs from the darling nature of independent cinema, but, as he points out, "*Training Day* may have been a commercial movie, but Denzel Washington is one of the greatest actors who ever lived, and I get to work with him". It also earned him his first of four Oscar nominations, the most recent of which came from *Boyhood*.

He enjoyed another notable year of extracurricular activity in 2015, when he released a novel called *Rules for a Knight*. The story is broken into sections, each one named after a specific virtue, and together they act as a kind of chivalric code. I was interested to know, out of the total of 20, what he considered the most important. The first of three he selected is solitude: "An appreciation of solitude is important. If you can be alone with yourself, it makes it so much easier to be in a crowded room." The second is courage: "As I have said, fortune favours the bold, and you have to take chances and risk failure. It is true that I have definitely learned more from failure, it is a much better teacher. Success is much more difficult to learn from. It takes courage to fail."

The third — and as they say in *Corinthians*, the greatest of these — is love: "I am not afraid to be corny. I have been to a lot of rallies in my life. I was at a rally for Ukraine a few days ago,

18+

WHAT IS AVAXHOME?

AVAXHOME-

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Herringbone
Donegal overcoat,
Private White V.C.

and it was the first time I had been in a room where it was an actual call to arms. I didn't know, I thought we were supporting Ukraine and peace and it very quickly evolved into a call to arms by some very compelling people in a very compelling situation — that there was no other answer. All the reading in my life, whether it be Shakespeare or Thích Nhat Hanh, or whatever you're reading in your life, all bends to the cycle of violence and [the idea that] violence perpetuates itself. I kept having this vision of like, Is there no third path, is there no path of non-violence to not let Putin succeed, to not create generations of hate and dead Russians and bringing the world to war? I know that is probably a John Lennon or Bob Marley pipe dream, but I was thinking about how love would be my third rule. Anything done without it tends to be misguided. If you do it with love then you can't fail, as the attempt itself is a win. Solitude, courage and love. If you're not loving yourself, you can't tie your shoes."

"Anything done without love tends to be misguided. If you do it with love, you can't fail, as the attempt itself is a win."

He would work with Washington and Fuqua again, in 2016's remake of *The Magnificent Seven*, a huge studio engagement that juxtaposed neatly with his true-to-form outing as Everett Lewis in the indie *Maudie*. He says of his fêted co-star in *Maudie* that, "It is exciting to run lines with Sally Hawkins. You feel her hunting for that same thing that I was hunting for when not laughing at Robin's jokes. She'd always be thinking, How can I go deeper, how can I disappear? It's a little bit of a magic trick."

Before Covid, and 30 years into his career, there was no sense of abatement, fatigue or laurels on which to rest. He worked on the wildly complex *First Reformed*, a story of a priest struggling with his faith and managing a dwindling congregation. It is a social commentary on the state of the church and religion in America. For Brett Goldstein, the star of *Ted Lasso* and presenter of the podcast *Films To Be Buried With*, *First Reformed* is the best piece in Hawke's canon. What is interesting to observe, as an Englishman, is that Britain had a recent television show with a similar premise, called *Rev*, which was on the BBC. The difference in approach is very telling. In the U.K. *Rev* is a comedy that lampoons the national church and its struggle to maintain relevance at grassroots level. *First Reformed* is much darker, a more severe exploration of the church's role in American life and on its communities. Hawke says: "This [the U.S.] is a country that prides itself on its Christian ethos, but where was white Christian America after Martin Luther King died? Why are we still having these conversations? Why has the Christian community not led in terms of equality and environmental works? It doesn't make sense to me."

As for the disparity between our nations' approaches to similar premises, Hawke allows himself another dose of Anglophilia. "The difference across the Atlantic is that you show your age and we show our age," he says. "This country [the U.S.] is still trying to form an identity. We have the right-wing, who interpret the constitution in one way, and we have the left, who interpret it another way, and they are both citing the constitution all the time and they are both claiming to be religious. I think you guys in your wisdom have realised that this whole thing of identity is something to laugh at because it is so big and so mysterious and so nameless, we just don't have the vocabulary to unify us into one thing, but America is still searching for that one thing. I was told my whole life that New York was the great melting pot, but one trip to London and that is the international melting pot — the exposure to different communities from all over the world. So you guys have evolved because of that. All the globe meets in London and America is still trying to hold on to the question of" — here he holds up his fist — "what is an American?" We even managed to have a chat about our beloved Lady Sovereign. "I strangely think that the Queen helps celebrity because she is the biggest celebrity, and the rest of us are just actors, athletes or, more importantly, politicians," Hawke says. "There are certain societal tropes that, yeah, it may be bullshit but it helps."

The pandemic has not stunted Hawke's momentum. He is an elder statesman of the screen who, as mentioned at the beginning of this piece, has no fewer than three current projects to which he lends his name. Ironically, the most topical of these is as a Marvel superhero: despite its involving Egyptian deities, time travel and portals, *Moon Knight* is an explicit commentary on the new political split, where solutions come from extreme people with extreme ideas. He plays the antagonist Arthur Harrow, a long-haired Jesus-esque character who walks in broken-glass-filled sandals and talks in calm and assuring tones while at the same time possessing the power to suck the soul out of people in seconds, which he does to those he feels may one day commit a

Herringbone Donegal overcoat, **Private White V.C.**; wool polo shirt, **Dolce & Gabbana**; jeans, **Polo Ralph Lauren**; Cash black leather boots, **Barbanera**.

Louisiana fedora, **Lock & Co**; denim western shirt, **Barbanera**; cotton vest, **Sunspel**; jewellery, **The Great Frog**; steel Datejust, **Rolex**.

“I strangely think that the Queen helps celebrity because she is the biggest celebrity, and the rest of us are just actors, athletes or politicians.”

Suede overshirt, **Mr P.**; denim western shirt and Trinity stripe trousers, **Barbanera**.

crime. Beware, false prophets! Hawke says: "I have lines in there that are straight-up Christian T.V. evangelist — 'People don't want to hear the good news'. People use dogma and zealotry to manipulate other people. One of the biggest problems we have is that none of us have an education in how to raise children in the environment of the internet. Confirmation bias is what the internet is all about. Someone tells me that Trump made a great speech the other day — I don't see that article; my father in Texas isn't going to see an article about AOC [Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez] giving some great liberal speech. We all see whatever we are looking for. We are not forced to be kind to each other and listen to each other. What I loved about Harrow was how he can take true statements and manipulate them so they sound true — 'Would you wait to weed the garden till after the roses are dead?' is a really interesting way to justify killing children. It makes sense but it doesn't make any sense at all."

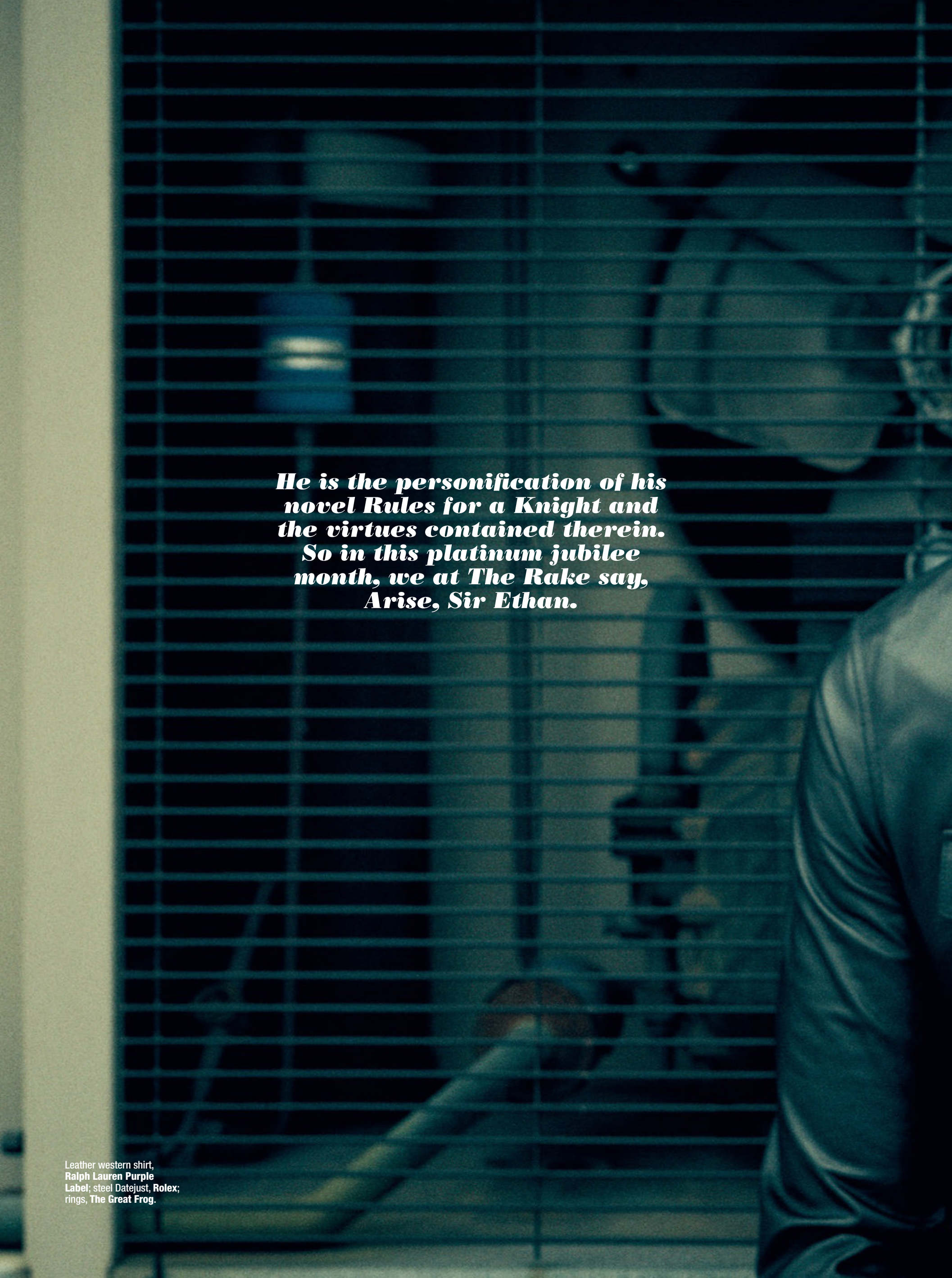
"When I've played a malevolent person, they have taken my psyche in a negative direction, and I don't like it."

Hawke also features in *The Northman*, the gory Nordic historical epic, and *The Black Phone*, the film that brings us together today, which is a remarkably creepy and disturbing horror thriller. I have been told in the past that an actor needs to find empathy in their characters to play them truthfully. Hawke elaborates on this by saying, "To understand your character, you have to understand" — he points at himself — "your character. I have to understand who I am to understand where this person I am playing intersect, and where my body language is wrong, but that means I really have to know me."

I cannot imagine finding the mindset of a child kidnapper, and assume, as Ethan is a father, it would be equally hard to search for and find that intersection. He says: "I get asked a lot about why I don't like playing the villain. I often joke that if people saw the dark side they can't unsee it — not completely unlike Jack Nicholson post-*The Shining* — but that's not true. I don't like to play the villain because it scares me so much. It scares me because the times I have played a malevolent person, Macbeth, Ivanov, people in a tremendous amount of pain, they take my life and my psyche in a negative direction, and I don't like it. Paul Newman said that he feels like he 'has become a collection of the attributes of the characters I like the most and strung them together'. I know what he means, and playing a villain, you get access to the part of your brain that might be mad or really clinically depressed or really hateful, jealous or malevolent. I find it is like controlled meditation, but to do it well you have to know how to guide yourself back.

"It's not hard to guide yourself back from a wonderful person you love: if I am taking on the characteristics of St. Francis, my family may think I am a little sanctimonious but they won't mind. My answer to myself on *The Black Phone* was to really access this sense of play. You know kids aren't scared of it, they will play the bogeyman, and I wear a mask a lot in the movie. It changes a lot but it is mask work, so I try and think of it more like Sophocles. I am not really playing the person, I am playing a child's idea of malevolent forces in the world. I didn't want to play the character, I found him very intimidating. The thing about the horror genre is that there is a certain math to it. You can meet great actors who are terrible in comedy, as there is timing to it. The same can be said for horror: the difference between something that is absolutely terrifying or something that is silly and stupid is, like, two frames in the edit. Scott Derrickson [the director] is a very smart guy, so I feel safe with him, but I was wary of it."

In our conversation, Ethan alluded to an aspiration he has nurtured since he began acting. "I want to make a movie that is good enough that it would be studied in class," he says. "There is an arrogance to say that, but if you don't think it somewhere in your heart, it is definitely not going to be." So as much as he seeks to entertain, he also has a connection with the artistic pursuit, the function of actors as provokers, people who inspire and intrigue and act as potential forces for good in a world in which the paths of right and wrong seem at times so far apart and merged. Objectively speaking, the best films he has made are indeed for studying — from *Boyhood* and its groundbreaking method to the enduring legacy of *Dead Poets Society* and the filmmaker's favourite, *First Reformed*. You may think, then, that Hawke would turn the volume down from 11 and put his feet up. No, the hunt is still on to create extraordinary work, and as such we can all be grateful, for the more ethical, valiant and fearless elder statesmen we have on screen, the better. He is the personification of his novel *Rules for a Knight* and the virtues contained therein. So in this platinum jubilee month, we at *The Rake* say, Arise, Sir Ethan.



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Leather western shirt, **Ralph Lauren Purple Label**; steel Datejust, **Rolex**; rings, **The Great Frog**.

GROOMING: MELISSA DEZARATE
PHOTOGRAPHY ASSISTANT: ZACK FORSYTH
BIRD: FALCONRY EXCURSIONS, NEW YORK
PHOTOGRAPHED AT VANDERVOORT STUDIOS, BROOKLYN

THE MAGIC DOWN THERE

It inspired Elvis and the Four Tops, among others, and became the gilded playground of Sinatra, Disney, Bardot and Tarzan (yes, you read that right). **STUART HUSBAND** *mixes a coco loco and dreams of Acapulco…*

A group of women walk to the pool at Warren Avis's villa, La Barranca, at Las Brisas, Acapulco, in April 1979.

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Acapulco, look here comes the sun
Acapulco, it's a day for fun
I can't wait till I meet your sweet senoritas
Kiss everyone
This is not time for siesta, this is time for fun…

The lyrics to the title song of *Fun in Acapulco* — the 1963 fiesta starring Elvis Presley and Ursula Andress — helped cement the vision of this palm-fringed, mountain-rimmed, semi-circular bay in the state of Guerrero, on Mexico's Pacific Coast, as a kind of sun-sparkled, azure-splashed Shangri-La. It was already well on its way to becoming Mexico's largest beach and *balneario* resort city, but, at the time, still retained vestiges of its original twilight-*paseo*, bayside-village charm.

The Duke of Windsor made a visit in 1920 and gave the place his proto-influencer approbation.

Elvis never made it to Acapulco — he'd been declared persona non grata by the authorities in Mexico after riots in cinemas showing his previous movies — but it hardly mattered that he'd had to shoot his scenes in Los Angeles; the critics bypassed the stars and the somewhat rudimentary plot (a pair of rival lifeguards get into a dive-off to win Andress's hand) and focused instead on the scenery. *The New York Times* called it "an attractive travel poster for the famed Mexican resort", and *Variety* acclaimed "Acapulco's Technicolorful glory". They weren't the first to have had their heads turned: word of Acapulco's allure had been disseminated among the great and the good after the Duke of Windsor made a visit in 1920 and gave the place his proto-influencer approbation. By the 1930s, enterprising hoteliers like Carlos Bernard and Albert Pullen were breaking ground on pioneering resorts like El Mirador and Las Americas, and foreign investment was starting to build.

It was the 1950s and sixties, however, that saw Acapulco elevated to gilded playground status, with the north end of the bay living up to its name as the Zona Dorada. "The resort is becoming the new sun spa for the international big rich and their attendant swingers," reported a breathless *Time* magazine in 1966, which went on to comprehensively elucidate: "Already, Baron and Baroness Guy de Rothschild have bought a house, the Loel Guinnesses have just built one, the Clint Murchisons are just finishing one, the Samuel Newhouses are renting one, and the Douglas Fairbankses Jr. are looking for one. Mexican millionaire Melchior Perusquia Jr. is spending $5,000,000 to build a private development for what he calls 'the best people in the world', including Walt Disney and Frank Sinatra, who last month bought another Acapulco house."

Vacationers that year apparently included "Lynda Bird Johnson (relaxing) and Anne Ford (honeymooning)", while "last week the chic league was further congested by Italian designer Emilio Pucci, who arrived bringing the season's first rainstorm and leading a glossy swirl of journalists and society's beautiful people — Mary Cushing, Caterine Milinaire, Aurora Hitchcock — on a swinging junket to celebrate his new perfume, Vivara. All of this, on top of a regular tourist season that will probably see 1,560,000 visitors stream in and out of a resort town of 100,000, has Acapulco full to bursting."

Every Zona Dorada needs an avid documentarian, and who better to capture the newfound fun in Acapulco than Slim Aarons? The resort fulfilled his much-vaunted mission of "photographing attractive people doing attractive things in attractive places", and the former war photographer and Purple Heart recipient cycled through several tours of duty in "the new sun spa" on assignment for *Holiday* or *Town & Country*, or simply on his own gilded-playground recognizance. "His photos of banquets in Acapulco — including one with actor Douglas Fairbanks Jr. and designers Oscar de la Renta and Emilio Pucci — had the kind of effortless fabulousness that told viewers, Keep dreaming," according to The Age of Ideas website.

That fabulousness was facilitated in no small part by Teddy Stauffer, the man who more than any other helped turn Acapulco gold. The Swiss-born bandleader had enjoyed great success in pre-war Germany as a 'swing king', but after falling

Clockwise from top: Bill Babb, Thomas Beecher, model Carolyn Phillips, Mrs Rabb and model Jean Adams enjoy some guitar music on a terrace in Acapulco, 1952; a long lunch in Acapulco in 1966: among the guests are (left to right) Douglas Fairbanks Jr., Oscar de la Renta, and, standing behind him, Emilio Pucci; on the other side of the table: Thomas Reed Vreeland stands behind the host in the red shirt, Pat de Cicco; and Mrs Charles Rogers sits in the pool at the Villa Vera Spa & Racquet Club.

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Clockwise from top: Oscar Obregon Salazar Gomez Velez Guzman y Murphy (centre, left) with Karen Murphy, Robin Goodland and Melissa Engelhardt at the Villa Nirvana hotel; Heidi Otto and Oscar Obregon; and two women chat at Armando's Beach Club.

Clockwise from top left: President Reagan and Nancy Reagan; a couple enjoy a drink by Warren Avis's private villa pool at Las Brisas; the pool at 'Little Beach House' villa; and patrons of the Villa Vera Hotel Spa & Racquet Club.

GETTY IMAGES

foul of Nazi sensibilities he hightailed it to the United States, where he became a movie composer. After visa difficulties necessitated a trip south of the border, the penniless Stauffer was thrown a lifeline by his old pal Errol Flynn, who engaged him as quartermaster on his yacht, Zaca. Stauffer quickly fell foul of Flynn's famously mercurial temper, however, and he was dumped ashore in Acapulco, where he immediately charmed his way into the good graces of Carlos Bernard, who hired him to run El Mirador's nightclub, La Perla. Stauffer went on to open his own legendary venues — Casablanca, the Villa Vera — and worked his Hollywood contacts book. Pretty soon, the likes of Elizabeth Taylor (who honeymooned at Villa Vera with Mike Todd), Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr., Eddie Fisher, Roger Vadim and Brigitte Bardot were beating a regular path to his palm-flanked doors. Others were also championing the resort, including John Wayne, Johnny 'Tarzan' Weissmuller, Ray Milland and Red Skelton, who purchased the Hotel Los Flamingos and turned it into a private playpen for themselves and their Hollywood chums; Wayne's personal fiefdom was a suite called the Casa Redonda, equipped with a two-and-a-half-metre bed (today it's named Casa Tarzan, in honour of Weissmuller, who lived there until his death in 1984). "Those were good days in Acapulco," says Adolfo Santiago, the current owner of Los Flamingos, who was a busboy at the hotel in its heyday. "Wayne, Weissmuller, Sinatra, Bing Crosby, even Jimmy Hoffa could walk the streets *sin problemas*."

Aarons trained his lens on this social whirl with all his breezy flair. Here were starlets drinking coco locos (said to have been invented in Acapulco in the thirties) straight from the shell (notably Francine Brandt, a Swiss-born sometime actress and full-time party girl who had an affair with the playwright John Osborne and was a frequent guest on Aristotle Onassis's yacht), or real-estate moguls playing backgammon while semi-immersed in their pools (notably Frank 'Brandy' Brandstetter, who was born into Austro-Hungarian nobility before becoming an intelligence operative and recipient of the Silver Star in world war II; he then opened the famed Las Brisas resort, nestled on a hillside above the city). Here was Topsy Taylor, *Vogue* editor and socialite, the great-great-great-great granddaughter of Moses Taylor, the son of John Jacob Astor's business manager.

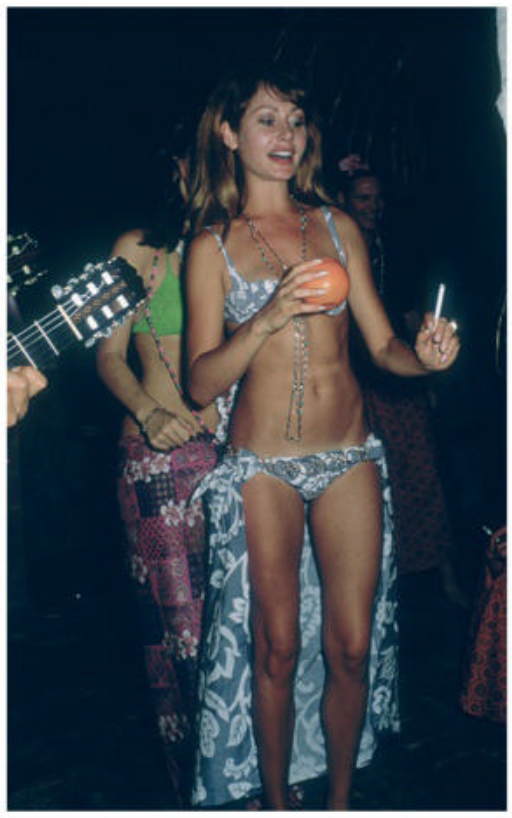
Here was Mary 'Minnie' Cushing, sister of the redoubtable Babe Paley — one of Aarons' favourite subjects — who would marry not only an Astor but also a Whitney. Here were designers like Arturo Pani, decorator to the elite in Mexico, who created a universally recognised 'Acapulco look' in the 1950s, mixing Aztec gilding with midcentury-modern ironwork (and whose villa was a must-see, particularly for the Moorish-inspired screen by the pool). Here were models like Veruschka, born Vera Gottliebe Anna Gräfin von Lehndorff-Steinort in East Prussia, muse to the likes of Salvador Dalí, Richard Avedon and Peter Beard. Here was Warren Avis, head of the rent-a-car firm and owner of the villa La Barranca, a favourite party venue for its cantilevered balconies and clifftop plunge-pool. And over there? No less than Germany's richest man of his era, Prince Johannes von Thurn und Taxis, the bisexual industrialist who would later marry the much younger Countess Gloria of Schönburg-Glauchau, known (affectionately?) as 'Princess TNT, the dynamite socialite'.

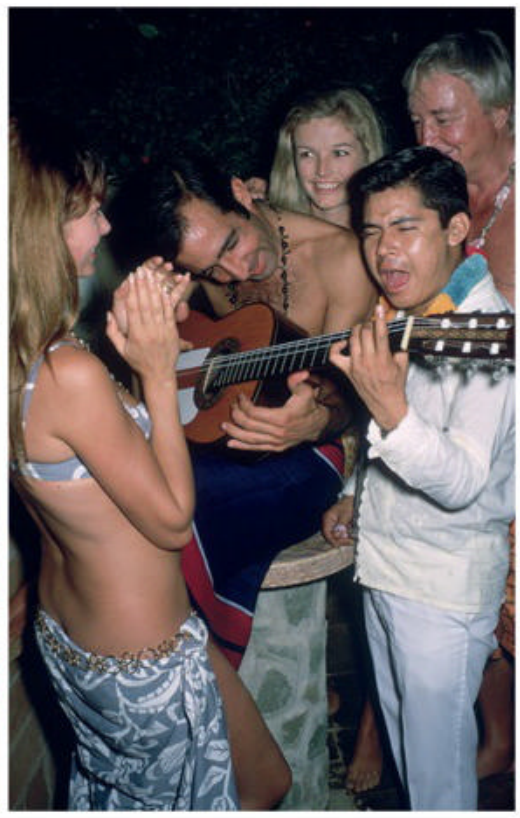
Financiers mingled with politicos who hobnobbed with crowned heads who fraternised with living legends.

Billionaire financiers (Herbie Siegel) mingled with politicos (Ronald and Nancy Reagan) who hobnobbed with crowned and garlanded heads (Baron Alexis de Rede and Baroness Marie-Hélène de Rothschild; Marina, Princess of Naples) who fraternised with living legends (James Stewart, with whom Aarons was often compared for his rugged good looks and folksy bonhomie; Aarons photographed him on Acapulco's golf course, in full Lacoste rig). "For all, from morning to night, there is the sun," assured *Time* in its 1966 encomium. "When it sets, there are the parties, two and often three a night. They begin late (Acapulco dinners start at 9.30 and often last until midnight), and host and guests wind up at Tequila a Go-Go" — another of Teddy Stauffer's gifts to the resort — "which stays open until 5am. The Rothschilds dodge the crowds at the less fashionable Aku-Tiki on the beach."

GETTY IMAGES

Charley Weaver at Las Brisas resort in Acapulco, 1972.





Clockwise from top left: Women at a costume party; Duchess Elga de Caraman at a beach party; the duchess serenaded by Manolo Arango while Teddy Stauffer looks on; Dinah Shore (centre) and Kirk Douglas (far right) at a beach party; *Vogue* editor Topsy Taylor; Baroness Marie-Hélène de Rothschild and Baron Alexis de Rede; and Suzy Gilly, Anita Colby, Mary Wells Lawrence, Sloan Simpson and Mrs Yul Brynner.

GETTY IMAGES

Three of Aarons' favourite subjects — all habitués of Tequila a Go-Go — presided at the apex of the Acapulco social scene. The Durango-born actress Dolores Del Río didn't so much turn heads as cause them to swivel the full 360. Her sophistication, style and poise had bewitched everyone from Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera to Errol Flynn and Orson Welles; according to George Bernard Shaw, "the two most beautiful things in the world are the Taj Mahal and Delores Del Río". Disillusioned with her position as the token Hollywood exotic, she'd returned to Mexico in the 1940s to play the earthy, dramatic roles she craved, and went to Acapulco to let her raven hair down, quite literally, for Aarons' camera: he photographed her in various pools, her tresses spread tendril-like around her, her bikini audaciously brief. Gloria Guinness, meanwhile, yielded nothing to Del Río in her power to captivate. She'd been born Gloria Rubio y Alatorre in Mexico in 1912, but her family's estates had been requisitioned after the revolution, leaving her to deploy her striking looks — angular features, huge brown eyes — in her mission to conquer high society. Each of her marriages took her further up the ladder: an Egyptian diplomat was swiftly followed by a Von Furstenberg count, and finally she bagged Loel Guinness, the banking scion and former British MP and RAF pilot, who had residences in France and Palm Beach as well as Acapulco. Guinness was the most irreverent of the coterie of superlative society chatelaines whom the writer Truman Capote dubbed his 'swans', for their air of steely self-possession and cygnine hauteur. Guinness had some top housekeeping tips for the one per cent, arguing that it was easier to maintain multiple properties than a single one, as "you simply keep the appropriate clothes at the appropriate house". In Acapulco, as shot by Aarons, this meant a white Halston resort suit, accessorised with a high-backed wicker chair and a shady veranda: it was the embodiment of her own assertion that "chic is absolutely innate".

First among equals, however, may well have been Merle Oberon, the Anglo-Indian actress who'd starred opposite Laurence Olivier in 1939's *Wuthering Heights* and had an affair with David Niven. In the introduction to his book *A Wonderful Time*, Aarons wrote that El Ghalal (a Mexican-Indian phrase meaning 'to love'), the sumptuous white house that Oberon and her Italian industrialist husband Bruno Pagliai spent two years constructing on a clifftop at the eastern end of the bay, was "considered to be the most beautiful vacation home in the world". Designed in Islamic-Moorish style by the architect Juan Sordo Madaleno, it featured Italian marble floors, Ming dynasty carvings, animal-print rugs that Oberon designed herself, and a west-facing 'outdoor living room' with an unrivalled view of the spectacular Acapulco sunsets, where Aarons composed many crisp, light-and-shadow studies of "the reigning queen of the illustrious seasonal assemblage", according to a profile of Oberon in a 1967 issue of *Life* magazine.

"For all, from morning to night, there is the sun. When it sets, there are the parties, two and often three a night."

Even as Aarons shuttled from poolside revelry to alfresco banquet via cocktail reception, some were already mourning the passing of the old, raffish Acapulco — "It used to be kind of schleppy," an 'expatriate American blonde' opined in *Time*; "now it's getting jetty" — while others were hymning an Edenic ambience that looked set to endure. "Where else could you find this climate in a country that's politically safe?" asked the Canadian real-estate mogul Count Jean de la Bruyere. "I follow the sun, and this is the place. And the informality! Here you may wear anything, but always no socks. That's very important. *Jamais les* socks."

Today, alas, the advice is more *jamais sans le gilet pare-balles*. Acapulco has long since lost its lustre, falling victim to the narco-violence that has engulfed Mexico in recent decades; it's now rated among the world's deadliest cities, with 107 murders per 100,000 inhabitants in 2020. Tourism rates have plummeted, and Aarons' photos of the Zona Dorada, and the varieties of liquid, limpid leisure that he anatomised there, now have an elegiac tone, a kind of mellow coco loco glow. It's a world that's impossible to recapture, one where the breeze is always benign, the ice is always crushed, the party is always starting, the siesta is forever forgone, and it's everyone's right — if not obligation — to keep dreaming.

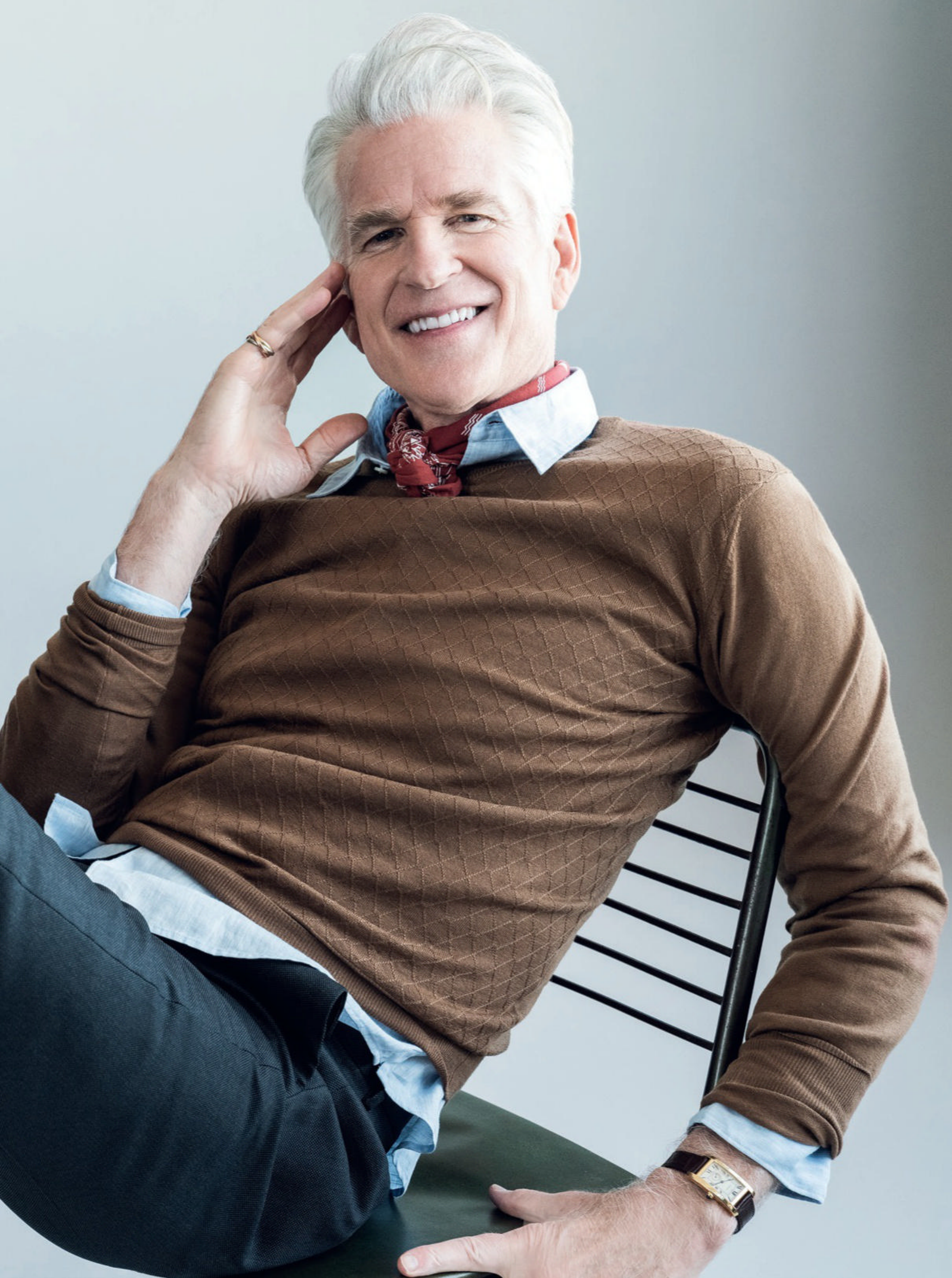
GETTY IMAGES

Carmen Alvarez plays backgammon with Frank 'Brandy' Brandstetter in a pool in Acapulco.

‘I AM A GOOD PERSON. I DO NOT TAKE JOY IN PLAYING THESE CHARACTERS’

Matthew Modine is back as the manipulative and ruthless Dr. Martin Brenner in season four of Stranger Things. But arch villainy, he insists, is not as fun as it might appear.

by **tom chamberlin** *photography* **victoria stevens** **styling** *mimi lombardo*



I am, and have always been, something of a second world war nut. My interest has become even more acute as the years have accumulated, with my attention shifting at any one point between the war's various stories, battles, campaigns, services and national contributions. However, I can say for certain how it all started, and that was with Matthew Modine.

My late grandfather was a bomber navigator in the war. He spent inordinate hours in the air in one of those glass noses you see on bombers, doing a job in which there was a high probability you wouldn't return home. He died when I was young, and my mother wanted to make sure I knew a bit more about his service, so she asked if I might watch *Memphis Belle* with her. This wholesome all-American movie, which stars Modine, scratched an itch I never knew I had: it filled me with wonder and gave me a thirst for knowledge on the subject that has never quite been slaked. I even sing *Danny Boy* to my children every night (changing the names to my two-syllable sons, Harry and Charlie) — if you know the film, you'll understand.

"Maybe the minds of people like Putin are so twisted they actually think they are on the right side of humanity."

Modine says of the making of it: "I loved all the guys on the plane; we are still friends. We were taken to a field in advance of filming with the SAS, who took us through training. We had to work together, solve problems together, and go on a midnight mission in the pitch-black. It was an extraordinary experience."

I should at this point declare an interest, for in some ways Matthew and I are former colleagues, having worked together on the much-missed *Finch's Quarterly Review*, where he was our Liberal-at-Large. I spoke to Matthew for this piece some weeks after I'd interviewed Ethan Hawke for this issue's cover story, and it struck me how the two men's observations intersected so frequently — not so much because I ask the same questions of everyone, but because these two fiercely thoughtful men have similar things on their minds and their maturity and values have deposited them in similar mental harbours.

Their main shared theme was that they are both currently playing antagonists. As such, their roles have affected them because their personal values sit in opposition to their on-screen personas. In Modine's case, in his latest outing as Dr. Brenner in the fourth season of *Stranger Things*, he says: "I do not take joy, treasure or relish playing these characters. Many of the characters I have played over the years were real-life characters, like Don Francis in *And the Band Played On*, which is about the search for and discovery of the Aids virus. The entrée to the medical professionals, virologists and the things I learned as a person on that journey provided me with a wealth of knowledge; it helped me shape my personal life. That's why playing the character who would do the kind of things Dr. Brenner does is painful to me personally.

"I am a good person who is always looking to contribute or find the solution to a problem, not cause it, that is the way I was raised. The biggest influence on my life is my wife, but maybe people like Dr. Brenner or Vladimir Putin's minds are so twisted that they actually think they are on the right side of humanity, that it's O.K. for him to generate lies about the character of the people of Ukraine, calling them Nazis and perpetuating this lie."

Stranger Things was part of the initial tranche of high-budget Netflix series that garnered vast international fanbases and won countless awards. Modine says: "The purpose of the show, first and foremost, is pure entertainment. They [the creators] dip their toes into concepts from *Firestarter*, *E.T.*, *Jaws*, *Poltergeist*, and even, with Brenner, *Altered States*. They say all art is theft but not all theft is art, and I think that what the creators have done is about dipping their toes into those genres and pulling really exciting elements from those shows and fashioning them into something that is new and fresh and the best of all those films."

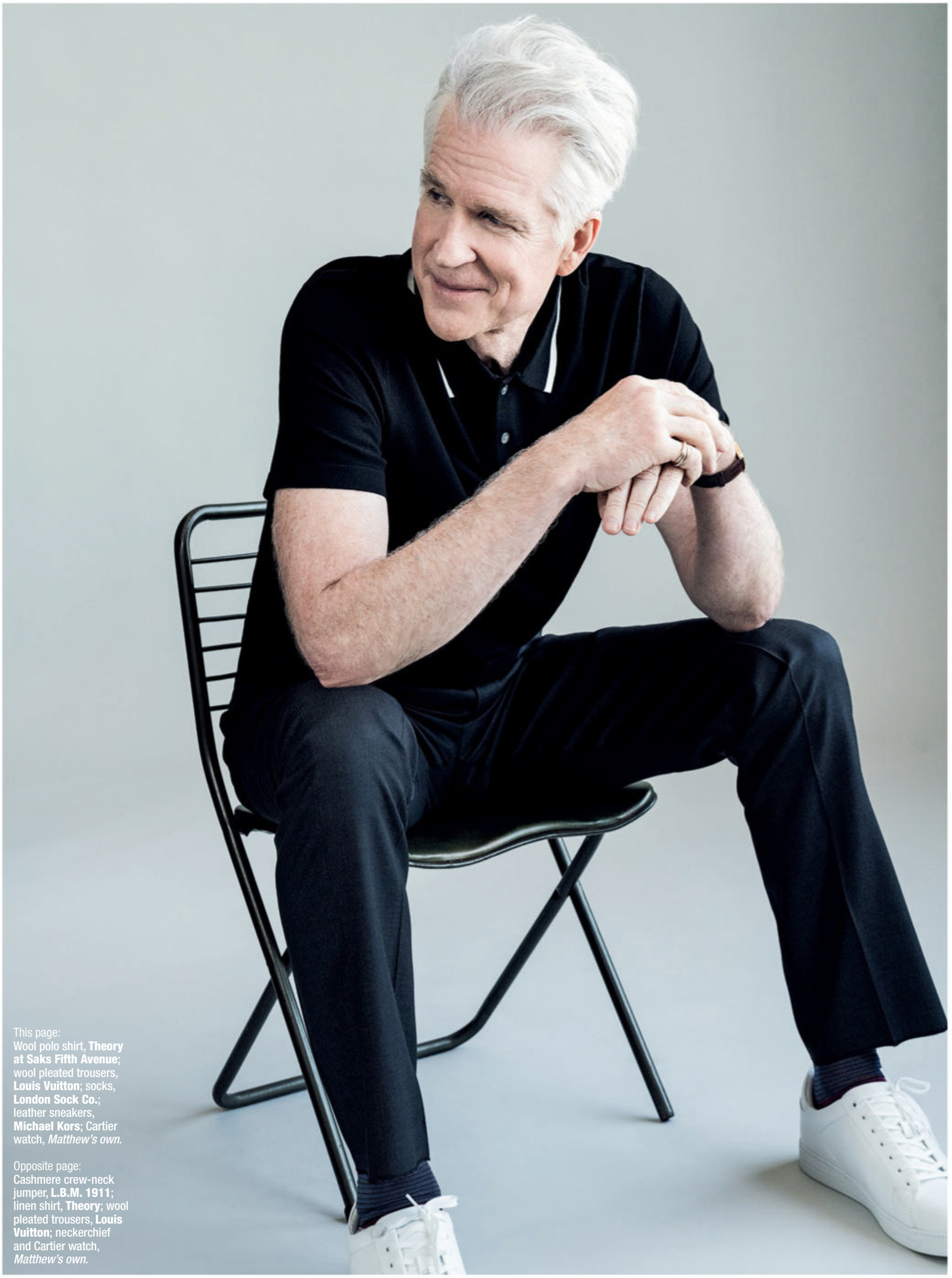
Matthew is also working on an animated film called *My Love Affair with Marriage*, for which he not only provides a voice but serves as Executive Producer. "The film explores the challenges and expectations for a young woman who is not in a relationship," he says. "How is her life defined in certain cultures because she is not married or doesn't have children at a certain age, and the film explores these expectations that the world has, which are quite different to this progressive, sexually charged character."

Additionally, Modine is a member of the extraordinary line-up for Christopher Nolan's *Oppenheimer*, a film about the Manhattan Project (back to world war II). Of course, being a Nolan film, it has deeper messages (about the environment), and is in sync with *Stranger Things* about the notion of what is left for the younger generation to inherit. He says: "When I heard that Chris was doing this film I let him know that if there was something I could help out with, I'd be happy to jump in. I did *The Dark Knight Rises* with him and had a good experience. Chris is someone who wants to know that you want to work with him — that's not to be misinterpreted as if it is bending the knee. Chris is an artist, and what is important for filmmakers like him is to know you want to be an arrow in his quiver. The funny thing about it was that when I contacted him, he said, 'Oh, you know, we are using a lot of unknown actors; the only person people will recognise is Cillian Murphy'. Then when I get in and I find out about Matt Damon and Robert Downey Jr. and Emily Blunt; Kenneth Branagh came in for a day, Gary Oldman came in for a day… it is a testament to his artistry."

It is fair to say Matthew wasn't the only person to reach out and make themselves known to Nolan, and it is a testament to Modine's artistry that when he did so, Nolan found a place for him in his epic, a story about perhaps the most important team of men or women of all time, more so than the Apollo astronauts. What was established by the Manhattan Project changed everything: the way we defend ourselves, the way we provide energy, how we establish order in the world, and who gets to form hegemonies. It will take serious artists to translate *Oppenheimer* to the screen, and there is no more appropriate member of the troupe than Matthew Modine.

Opening spread:
Matthew wears cashmere crew-neck jumper, **L.B.M. 1911**; linen shirt, **Theory**; wool pleated trousers, **Louis Vuitton**; neckerchief and Cartier watch, *Matthew's own.*

This page:
Cashmere roll-neck, **N.Peal**; wool pleated trousers, **Louis Vuitton**; Cartier watch, *Matthew's own.*



This page:
Wool polo shirt, **Theory at Saks Fifth Avenue**; wool pleated trousers, **Louis Vuitton**; socks, **London Sock Co.**; leather sneakers, **Michael Kors**; Cartier watch, *Matthew's own.*

Opposite page:
Cashmere crew-neck jumper, **L.B.M. 1911**; linen shirt, **Theory**; wool pleated trousers, **Louis Vuitton**; neckerchief and Cartier watch, *Matthew's own.*

FASHION ASSISTANT: SAVANNAH AVANT
GROOMING: LAILA HAYANI
PRODUCTION: JENNIFER ROVERO

HELLO, LADIES

Our **MRS RAKE** *universe is expanding — with the help of two special guests. Lady Eliza and Lady Amelia Spencer, the twin daughters of Earl Spencer, grew up in South Africa but have returned to their native England amid a wave of media attention. In their style Eliza and Amelia embody the modern voice of classic elegance, and in their working lives they are ambassadors for Chopard: frankly, it would have been rude not to invite them to take part in a shoot for* **THE RAKE**. *The result speaks for itself.*

photography ***kim lang*** *fashion direction* ***grace gilfeather*** *produced by* ***JJ Media***

Lady Amelia, left: cashmere cricket jumper, **Proenza Schouler at Fenwick**; wool pleated trousers, **Boss**; Kate loafers, **Tod's**; earrings from The Happy Diamonds collection featuring two dancing diamonds and diamond pavé set in 18-carat white-gold, 33mm Happy Sport from The Happy Sport collection featuring a silver dial, five dancing diamonds, diamond bezel (1.24cts), 09.01 Chopard self-winding mechanical movement in stainless steel on a black alligator strap, **Chopard**.

Lady Eliza, right: cashmere polo, **Chinti & Parker**; white pleated trousers, **Polo Ralph Lauren**; Kate loafers, **Tod's**; Oval Happy Sport from The Happy Sport collection featuring a silver dial, seven dancing diamonds, a sapphire crown set on a stainless steel pebble bracelet, **Chopard**.

Eliza (left):
Brown cashmere sweater, **Chinti & Parker**; white crêpe flare trouser, **Caroline Andrew**; 33mm Happy Sport from The Happy Sport collection featuring a silver dial, diamond bezel (1.24cts), five dancing diamonds set in 18-carat ethical rose-gold bracelet, **Chopard**.

Amelia (right):
Silver silk blouse, **Connolly**; tobacco pleated trousers, **Malene Birger at Fenwick**; Happy Hearts ring from The Happy Diamonds collection featuring a mother-of-pearl heart and a dancing diamond set in 18-carat rose-gold; earrings from The Happy Diamonds collection featuring two dancing diamonds and diamond pavé set in 18-carat white-gold, **Chopard**.

Eliza: Lilac silk blouse and pleated trousers, **Victoria Beckham at Fenwick**; The Temptations collection earrings featuring two rose-cut green tourmalines (14cts), pear-shaped tourmalines rubellite (16.58ct), marquise-cut amethysts (6.26cts), and diamonds (1.20cts) set in 18-carat rose-gold, **Chopard**.

Amelia: White cotton blouse, **Budd Shirtmakers**; pleated trousers, **Polo Ralph Lauren**; orange silk scarf, **Hermès**; Kate loafers, **Tod's**; Nuage necklace from The Precious Lace collection in ethical 18-carat gold set with pear-shaped and brilliant-cut diamonds (totalling 1.88ct); Happy Hearts earrings from The Happy Diamonds collection featuring two dancing diamonds, round brilliant-cut diamonds set in 18-carat ethical white-gold, **Chopard**.

Opposite page:
Eliza: White chiffon blouse, **Gilmar at Fenwick**; earrings from The Haute Joaillerie collection featuring two briolette-cut quartz (26.27cts), rose-cut and brilliant-cut diamonds (4.14cts) set in 18-carat white-gold, **Chopard.**

This page:
Eliza: Black crêpe wool bespoke suit, **Caroline Andrew;** Jacqueline heels, **Di Minno;** earrings from The Happy Diamonds collection featuring two dancing diamonds and diamond pavé set in 18-carat white-gold, **Chopard.**

Amelia:
Cashmere T-shirt, **Chinti & Parker**; pleated wool trousers, **Boss**; black polarised sunglasses, Happy Hearts earrings from The Happy Diamonds collection featuring two dancing diamonds, round brilliant-cut diamonds set in 18-carat ethical white-gold, **Chopard**.

Amelia:
Silk blouse with neck scarf and high-waisted pleated trousers, **Polo Ralph Lauren**; nude patent heels, **Christian Louboutin**; Happy Sport from The Happy Sport collection featuring a green mother-of-pearl dial, a tsavorite, seven dancing diamonds in stainless steel 18-carat rose-gold on an emerald green alligator strap, **Chopard**.

This page, Amelia:
Silk blouse with neck scarf and high-waisted pleated trousers, **Polo Ralph Lauren**; nude patent heels, **Christian Louboutin**; Happy Sport from The Happy Sport collection featuring a green mother-of-pearl dial, a tsavorite, seven dancing diamonds in stainless steel 18-carat rose-gold on an emerald green alligator strap, pendant on chain from The Happy Spirit collection featuring three dancing diamonds and pavé diamonds (3.32cts) set in 18-carat white-gold, **Chopard**.

Opposite page:
Amelia, left, wears: cashmere cricket jumper, **Proenza Schouler at Fenwick**; wool pleated trousers, **Boss**; Kate loafers, **Tod's**; earrings from The Happy Diamonds collection featuring two dancing diamonds and diamond pavé set in 18-carat white-gold, 33mm Happy Sport from The Happy Sport collection featuring a silver dial, five dancing diamonds, diamond bezel (1.24cts), 09.01 Chopard self-winding mechanical movement in stainless steel on a black alligator strap, **Chopard**.

Eliza, right, wears: cashmere polo, **Chinti & Parker**; white pleated trousers, **Polo Ralph Lauren**; Kate loafers, **Tod's**; Oval Happy Sport from The Happy Sport collection featuring a silver dial, seven dancing diamonds, a sapphire crown set on a stainless steel pebble bracelet, **Chopard**.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Spain's parched coast is fertile soil for the lens of Diego Merino, especially when Oriol Elcacho and Davinia Pelegri are in front of it. The couple are expecting their second child, and we could not be more thrilled for them.

photography **diego merino** *fashion direction* **grace gilfeather**

Opening spread:
Oriol wears Riviera T-shirt, **Sunspel**; Gregory linen trouser, **Ralph Lauren Purple Label**; hat, *Oriol's own*.

Davinia wears Selina dress, **Casa Raki**; espadrilles, **Russell & Bromley**.
Watch: Royal Oak Selfwinding 50th Anniversary, **Audemars Piguet**.

This page and opposite:
Oriol wears Koi shirt and double-breasted mohair suit, **Barbanera**; sunglasses, **Cutler & Gross**.
Watch: Royal Oak Jumbo Extra-Thin 50th Anniversary, **Audemars Piguet**.

Opposite page:
Davinia wears cashmere cable-knit jumper, **Polo Ralph Lauren**; sunglasses, **Cutler & Gross**.
Oriol wears linen shirt, **Anderson & Sheppard**.

This page:
Oriol wears herringbone and hemp linen blend two-piece suit, **Brunello Cucinelli**; linen shirt, **Anderson & Sheppard**; boat shoes, **Church's**.

This page:
Oriol wears linen shirt and buckled linen-silk shorts, **Ralph Lauren Purple Label**; sunglasses, **Cutler & Gross**. Watch: Royal Oak Jumbo Extra-Thin 50th Anniversary, **Audemars Piguet**.

Opposite page:
Davinia wears cotton sundress, **Heidi Klein at Fenwick**; sunglasses, **Cutler & Gross**. Watch: Royal Oak Selfwinding 50th Anniversary, **Audemars Piguet**.

Oriol wears linen blend shirt and pleated trousers, **Tod's**. Watch: Royal Oak Jumbo Extra-Thin 50th Anniversary, **Audemars Piguet**.

Opposite page:
Oriol wears Riviera T shirt, **Sunspel**; Gregory linen trouser, **Ralph Lauren Purple Label**; hat, *Oriol's own*.
Davinia wears Selina dress, **Casa Raki**.
Watch: Royal Oak Jumbo Extra-Thin 50th Anniversary, **Audemars Piguet**.

This page:
Oriol wears cotton striped dressing gown and herring linen beach shorts, **Anderson & Sheppard**.

Oriol wears khaki gabardine safari jacket, contemporary trousers, sand linen safari shirt and silk pocket-square, **Edward Sexton**; sunglasses, **Cutler & Gross**; tassel loafers, **Crockett & Jones**. Watch: Royal Oak Jumbo Extra-Thin 50th Anniversary, **Audemars Piguet**.

This page:
Oriol wears linen shirt and herring linen beach shorts, **Anderson & Sheppard**.
Watch: Royal Oak Jumbo Extra-Thin 50th Anniversary, **Audemars Piguet**.

Opposite page:
Oriol wears silk pink polo sweater and olive silk trousers, **Brioni**; suede boat shoes, **Church's**.
Davinia wears silk dress, **Max Mara at Fenwick**; sandals, **Grenson**.

Mas de Torrent Hotel & Spa. A journey to happiness. A traditional 18th century Catalan farmhouse, transformed into a luxury hotel on the Costa Brava that oozes happiness, calm, glamour and exclusivity. All 39 suites are surrounded by mature gardens and shady terraces allowing guests to soak up the essence of Mediterranean living. Located just 100km from Barcelona, Mas de Torrent is situated amid Catalonia's iconic, honey-coloured medieval villages and the pine-fringed, picture-perfect inlets of the Costa Brava's finest beaches.

The celebrated Catalan chef Ramón Freixa combines a passion for excellent local products with a deep knowledge of traditional Catalan cuisine to create inventive, new-wave dishes. A carefully chosen wine list accompanies both menus.

Opposite page:
Oriol wears rose silk polo sweater and olive trousers, **Brioni**; sunglasses, **Cutler & Gross**.

This page:
Oriol wears Riviera T-shirt, **Sunspel**; Gregory linen trouser, **Ralph Lauren Purple Label**; leather loafers, **Tod's**; hat, *Oriol's own.*
Watch: Royal Oak Jumbo Extra-Thin 50th Anniversary, **Audemars Piguet**.

HAIR AND MAKE-UP: JORGE MORANDEIRA
PRODUCTION: LIGHTHOUSE PRODUCTION
PHOTOGRAPHED ON LOCATION AT MAS DE TORRENT HOTEL & SPA

Oriol wears cotton stripe dressing gown and herring linen beach shorts, **Anderson & Sheppard**;
Watch: Royal Oak Jumbo Extra-Thin 50th Anniversary, **Audemars Piguet**.

Davinia wears cotton sundress, **Heidi Klein at Fenwick**.
Watch: Royal Oak Selfwinding 50th Anniversary, **Audemars Piguet**.

compendium

PARIS, JE T'IME; THIS WEIGHS A TONDA; **SETTING OUT YOUR ARTINGSTALL;** ONCE WAS LOST.

ROMAIN LEVRAULT

Vacheron Constantin Métiers d'Art Grand Sphinx de Tanis in pink-gold on blue alligator strap. Price on application.

GLOSSED IN ANTIQUITY

Just when you thought the oldest Swiss manufacture couldn't imbue their wristwatches with any more artisanal flair, Vacheron Constantin add four new pieces to their Métiers d'Art limited edition series.

by ***scott harper***

What do the adventures of Vasco da Gama, the Chinese year of the dog, and a paper-and-silk hot air balloon that glided over Paris in 1783 have in common? They — and their topical kith and kin — have all been depicted as part of Vacheron Constantin's Métiers d'Art programme, which invites watch lovers to journey through time via the almost unfathomable creative brio of its master artisans.

Now, as part of a partnership with the Louvre instigated in 2019, and inspired by the artefacts contained within that institution's hallowed walls, one of just a handful of still-operational manufactures that lived through the French revolution is adding four new pieces, all with pink-gold cases and limited to five units each, to the Métiers d'Art canon, each dedicated to one of the great civilisations of antiquity.

Vacheron's relationship with the Louvre is dedicated to breathing new life into human history, ancient and modern.

Paying a visit to the Ancient Egyptian empire, one of the four pieces depicts the Grand Sphinx de Tanis, a granite sculpture discovered in the ruins of the Temple of Amun-Ra in what was once Egypt's capital, Tanis. Those who have visited the Louvre as scholars of antiquity even further to the east, meanwhile, will recognise the Frieze of Lions, a glazed-brick decoration found in the courtyard of the palace of Darius the Great in Susa, modern-day Iran.

Ancient Greece is represented by the Winged Victory of Samothrace, a piece discovered in 1863 on the island of Samothrace in the northern Aegean Sea, which now resides at the top of the Louvre's Daru staircase. Ancient Rome makes its appearance in the form of a bust of Octavian Augustus, the adopted son of Caesar, who became, on the assassination of the latter, the first emperor of ancient Rome.

It's impossible to overstate the painstaking intricacy of the artisanal endeavour that brought this quartet of pieces to life. While words such as 'engraving' are familiar, few will be familiar with 'ramolayage'. Also known as the 'pounced ornament' technique, it involves creating form by stripping away micro-millimetres of material — an irreversible process requiring patience and poise. It was the ultra-precise application of this technique, with carved gold appliqué as the material, that brought to life the Grand Sphinx de Tanis in such a minuscule space, with the image then given extra depth and patination using a blowtorch.

Similarly, everyone will have heard of enamelling, but far fewer of champlevé enamelling, whereby surfaces are etched and filled with vitreous enamel, as seen on the decorative dial elements surrounding the carved-gold-appliqué head of the aforementioned Grand Sphinx de Tanis piece. Grisaille enamelling, meanwhile — a technique dating to the 16th century and consisting of applying white enamel strokes to a dark enamel dial coating — has been used to depict decorative friezes, borrowed from two Greek vases, found on the periphery of the Winged Victory of Samothrace piece.

Elsewhere, Vacheron's employment of stone marquetry — a technique more commonly applied, using hardwood, shell or ivory, to designs for furniture — might better be described as 'micro-marquetry': in the case of the Frieze of Lions, in order to more authentically recreate glazed bricks affixed to a wall, the craftspeople chose stone fragments with veins, inherently weaker and trickier to work with than those without (69 minuscule shards, differing in appearance and size, were sourced in all).

The micro-mosaic work, meanwhile, involved the setting of stones 0.55mm in diameter. Take a closer look at the periphery of the blue-green enamelled dial surrounding the Octavian Augustus bust: based on a fourth-century mosaic discovered in Lod, Israel, it contains 660 quartzite, cacholong, dumortierite, mochaite, red jasper, grossular and red aventurine stones.

To give the uniquely gifted in-house artisans as much of a canvas as possible on which to commit their remarkable work — or as much canvas as a 40mm-diameter disc can afford — the apertures for reading the time and calendar indications are positioned around the dial periphery. And the scrupulous artistry doesn't end with the dial: text has been applied, using a method

Vacheron Constantin Métiers d'Art Lion de Darius in pink-gold on grey alligator strap. POA.

Below left: The stone marquetry of the Lion de Darius being meticulously placed.

Bottom left: Self-winding Manufacture Calibre 2460 G4/2, from the Lion de Darius, featuring four discs indicating the hours, minutes, day and date.

Vacheron Constantin Métiers d'Art Victoire de Samothrace in white-gold on dark brown alligator strap. POA.

Below left: Drawings and inspiration for the Victoire de Samothrace.

Bottom left: The centre of the dial for the Victoire de Samothrace, enamelled in brown, which comprises rare pigments.

ROMAIN LEVRAULT

Vacheron Constantin Métiers d'Art Buste d'Auguste in white-gold on burgundy alligator strap. POA.

Bottom left: The white-gold bezel being placed onto the case of the Buste d'Auguste.

Bottom left: Self-winding Manufacture Calibre 2460 G4/2, from the Buste d'Auguste, featuring four discs indicating the hours, minutes, day and date.

Vacheron Constantin Métiers d'Art Grand Sphinx de Tanis in pink-gold on blue alligator strap. POA.

whereby a thin metallic film is deposited onto a surface, to the watches' sapphire crystal. Depending on the model, observant owners will quickly encounter either an extract of the founding charter of the Palace of Darius (in cuneiform); a transcription of the cartouche of the pharaoh Merneptah engraved on the sphinx of Tanis (in hieroglyphic); a dedication to the Great Gods of Samothrace found in the Temple of Samothrace (in ancient Greek script); or an appeal made to the emperor Augustus, engraved on a Roman stele found in Algeria (in Latin script). Meanwhile, the 237-component movement features a pink-gold oscillating weight bearing a depiction, copied from an 18th-century lithograph, of the east facade of the Louvre. All models have either blue or grey Mississippians alligator leather straps.

Vacheron Constantin's relationship with the world's most visited museum is dedicated to breathing new life into human history, ancient and modern. Joint projects in the past have included the restoration of La Création du Monde, a clock presented to King Louis XV in 1754. Another initiative saw the Louvre offer, via auction, a single-piece Vacheron edition, Les Cabinotiers, whose dial bore an enamel rendering of a Louvre artwork of the buyer's choosing (the auction, at Christie's, fetched £280,000).

In terms of pure artisanal endeavour, though — and that beautiful dichotomy whereby the skills applied either side of a disc of metal are so disparate and yet so complementary — this is arguably the partnership's most game-changing creative tour de force to date. Manufactures who pride themselves on world-beating dial decoration may consider the bar officially raised.

Parmigiani Fleurier ×
Revolution & The Rake Tonda
PF Micro-Rotor ‘Serenissima’.

Insert, right: Guido Terrini, the
C.E.O. of Parmigiani Fleurier.

INTRODUCING THE PARMIGIANI FLEURIER × *REVOLUTION* & *THE RAKE* TONDA PF MICRO-ROTOR 'SERENISSIMA'

Our first collaboration with Parmigiani Fleurier features a salmon dial in the minimalist Tonda PF case that symbolises a renewed vision of the brand under Chief Executive Guido Terreni.

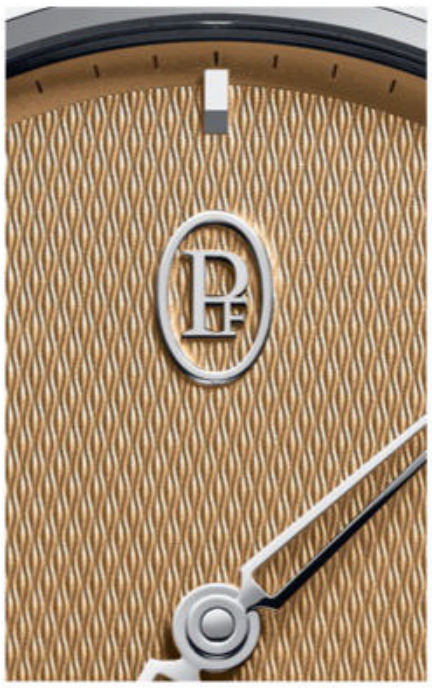
by ***wei koh***

People following my quixotic, often bumbling video exploits in the realm of high watchmaking have noticed that I like to use the colloquialism 'dope' — as in, 'Dude, this watch is dope' — when assigning praise to my favourite timepieces. Which inspired me to study the etymology of the term. The results are, shall we say, misleading, as previous usages of the term skewed towards negativity, i.e. 'That guy's a dope'. So I was perplexed how, in the context of eighties rapper parlance, 'dope' came to express all things that are good and beneficent to humanity, until I realised that the first three letters are the same as those of the neurotransmitter dopamine, which is responsible for flooding our nervous systems with the sensation of pleasure — a feeling that cuts to the very nexus of the term 'dope'. I remember the exact moment I set eyes on the act of unremitting dopeness that is Guido Terreni's Tonda PF during last year's Geneva Watch Days. Within seconds I experienced something unusual, confusing and definitely unexpected. Though the weather was balmy, with a bright blue Geneva sky painted idyllically over the famous lake visible from the Parmigiani Fleurier suite in the Hotel Beau Rivage, it was not responsible for the meteoric rise in temperature I was experiencing. That was down to my brain's sudden and explosive production of dopamine, leading to a sudden increase in my heart rate.

The PF was such a brilliant design — dynamically charged and with enthralling nuance, from the miniature guilloché pattern on the dial and the micro-fluting on the platinum bezel to the hand polishing on the interior edges of the lugs that face the case and the contrast between the tapering polished sections that flow into the sublimely brushed bracelet. Together, these elements elicited a response I had not previously associated with Parmigiani Fleurier: unadulterated, uncut, never-stepped-on, 100 per cent pure, unbridled desire. My second encounter with the PF happened later that week, when my friend and the brand's chief marketing officer, Rachel Leung, walked into *Revolution* magazine's pasta and Negroni supper held at my colleague Eleonor Picciotto's duplex. I was blending together an industrial quantity of the cocktail (basically upending a bottle each of gin, vermouth and bitters simultaneously into a makeshift punch bowl) when I saw the watch beckoning seductively on her wrist. As if reading my mind, as I handed her a Negroni, she passed me the PF to try on. Immediately I felt that heady, opiatic rush return. I was hooked. The PF was so damn appealing on the wrist.

At 40mm in diameter and with a thickness of just 7.8mm, it creates a wonderful dynamic tension between a strong wrist presence counterpointed by a lithe Brâncuși-like elegance that makes it a pleasure to wear. Driven by pure instinct, the next day I telephoned Terreni and arranged to purchase one. This decision has proven remarkably prescient of me, as I managed to acquire my watch just before the global consensus of its dopeness spread through social media, causing the massive tsunami of desire to smash into the side of Parmigiani's headquarters in the normally somnambulant town of Fleurier. Suddenly, Terreni's and Leung's email, WhatsApp and IG accounts were deluged with requests for the watch. The gale-force demand for PFs — in all executions, including the chronograph, the annual calendar, the stunning split-seconds chronograph through to this year's novelties, the skeletonised and the amazing GMT rattrapante versions — has been unremitting. One of the best moments of the 2022 Watches and Wonders in Geneva occurred when I strolled into the Parmigiani booth towards the end of the fair. I saw Guido, who was exhausted but delighted. He passed me a glass of champagne. "In just the few days of the fair, we took orders that are four times 2021 revenues," he said. "I wish I could serve the customers waiting for the watch, but it will take some time."

What made me happy was that this success couldn't have happened to a nicer and more deserving person. What you



Clockwise from top left: Intricate guilloché on the salmon dial limited edition for *Revolution & The Rake*; The stunning Tonda PF Skeleton presented at Watches & Wonders this year, here in rose gold; The caseback reveals the micro-rotor with Revolution imprint; The integrated steel bracelet of the Parmigiani Fleurier Tonda PF is ergonomic by design and makes any Tonda PF watch effortless to wear; Perfect by design — the Tonda PF Micro-Rotor in steel.

Parmigiani Fleurier × *Revolution & The Rake* Tonda PF Micro-Rotor 'Serenissima'

Ref: PFS914-1020001-100182.
Movement: Self-winding calibre PF703; 48-hour power reserve.
Functions: Hours, minutes and date.
Case: 40mm; polished and satin-finished stainless steel with platinum knurled bezel; water resistant to 100m.
Dial: Salmon; rhodium-plated applied hour markers.
Strap: Polished and satin-finished stainless steel bracelet.
Price: CHF21,450.
Availability: Numbered and limited edition of 25 pieces.

should know about Terreni is that he is one of the most talented and dynamic leaders around, with a truly gifted ability when it comes to what the industry calls 'product', and which I've always taken to mean 'designing a bloody brilliant watch'.

A new design philosophy

You have to understand that the task Terreni was given when he accepted the role of C.E.O. of Parmigiani Fleurier was monumental. Let's call it Herculean, like cleaning out the Augean stables or slaying the Nemean lion in terms of monumentality. He had to overhaul and reimagine a brand that had amazing watchmaking competence and some of the very best quality watches on the planet (check out the internal angles on a Parmigiani movement as irrefutable evidence), but that had also somehow never found the right message or design to make the hearts of men beat faster.

I remember, when he arrived, he undertook a mission to discover the brand's aesthetic codes, only to realise the majority of people in the design department had no idea what they were. So he began to construct a philosophy and build a team. Examining watches such as the double-stepped bezel Toric from the brand's past (a model perfectly poised for revival), Terreni and his team identified the elements of subtlety and refined nuance. Through their genius they refracted and channelled these idea in extremis into a new vision for Parmigiani. These new watches, grouped under the new minimalist designation 'PF', were simultaneously the epitome of understated elegance and yet energetic, bold and fearlessly new. Together with his team, Terreni has engineered a watch for the connoisseur who has passed through the more obvious watches and wants something different and stealthy. His huge effort endowed the brand and its watches with a sudden, unexpected and very welcome sense of singularity and perenniality — designs so good you could imagine they were already in existence for decades.

To be fair, his timing couldn't have been better. The demand for integrated bracelet sports chic watches has reached heretofore unseen heights this year, stirred by a feeding frenzy over the Royal Oak, Nautilus and even Overseas watches. But the PF is undefinably great in its own right. The momentum in the industry, plus Terreni's design brilliance, resulted in the public perception of Parmigiani Fleurier changing 180 degrees overnight. Theodore Panos, the Area Manager at Parmigiani Fleurier S.A., who looks after the brand in Singapore, says: "Guido's work is nothing short of incredible. A year ago I was struggling to set meetings with collectors and retailers. Now I have to turn away offers for business, so overwhelming is the demand for the PF." The fact that Terreni has enacted this change in less than a year has got to be superhuman by any standard.

Let's flash back to my visit to Parmigiani Fleurier last year, before the maelstrom of overwhelming positivity had reached the remote Swiss village. In one of my rare moments of clarity, I said to Terreni, "I would like to create a limited edition of the PF with you". This was a moment of divine providence for me — if I'd asked a few months later, the demand that had emerged would have made the project impossible. Because Terreni is a gentleman, he stood by our agreement despite the huge over-demand he is facing. I've always had a penchant for watches with salmon dials, so I made my request of him, which inspired a laugh. After all, colour for Terreni is not about a simple hue but more the subtle modulation of contrasting shades to arrive at the perfect optic representation of mood.

From a design perspective, it is representative of an all-new sports-chic icon, a beacon of joy and triumph.

For the PF collection, he was profoundly inspired by Le Corbusier and his colour keyboards, first created in 1931. The architect believed in the harmony of colours and the way they affect space and mood. Terreni says: "Fortunately, the colour you are suggesting represents joy, energy and triumph. And as such, I think it is the perfect colour to celebrate our survival of the shared experience of the last two years. Let's make this a watch of hope, positivity and renewal."

From there, Terreni began to experiment with the shade, and eventually arrived at a colour that makes me think of Botticelli painting the first light rising over the Gulf of Venice, at the north of the Adriatic Sea. As I often go for runs at daybreak when in residence at La Serenissima, I am very familiar with this golden rose hue. Terreni has captured this perfectly, so much so that I have been referencing our collaborative Tonda PF Micro-Rotor watch as 'Serenissima', or, in English, 'serenity'. It is, to me, the perfect timepiece in that, thanks to its extraordinary ergonomics, it is blissful to wear. From a design perspective, it is representative of an all-new sports-chic icon — and with this coloured dial, a beacon of joy, energy and triumph. In other words, it is dopeness personified.

Stephen Fry & Paul Feig.

Isabel Froemming, Isabella Charlotta Poppius and DJ Fiona Jane.

Navid Sole and guest.

ARTINGSTALL'S LAUNCH PARTY AT ISOBEL

06.04.22

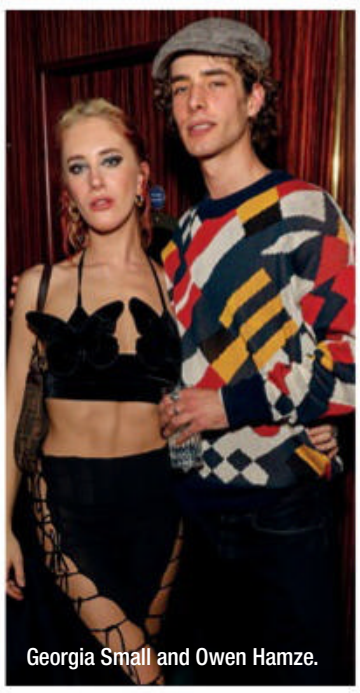
THE RAKE *wishes to congratulate our friend Paul Feig for the successful and convivial launch of his own gin.*

Laurie Feig, Molly Whitehall and Johanna Whitehead.

Johanna Whitehead, Molly Whitehall and Roxie Nafousi.

Ravinder Minhas, Michael Whitehall, Hilary Amanda Jane and Manjit Minhas.

Paul Newrick, Berenice, Eric Lanlard and Alistair Guy.


Georgia Small and Owen Hamze.

Vicky Lee.

Ryan-Mark Parsons, centre, and guests.

Laurie and Paul Feig.

MAX CISOTTI

Ravinder Minhas, Bhuvanvir Maingi and Sapreet Buttar.

Ryan-Mark Parsons and Navid Sole.

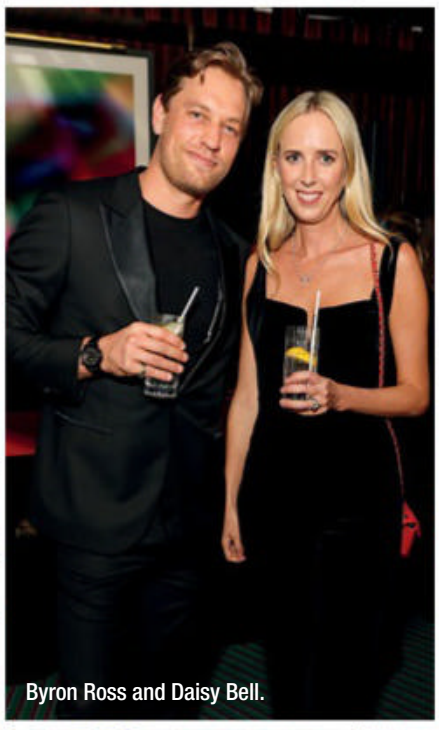
Laurie Feig and Jim Hedges.

Louise Fennell and Theo Fennell.

Laurie Feig, Astrid and Davina Harbord.

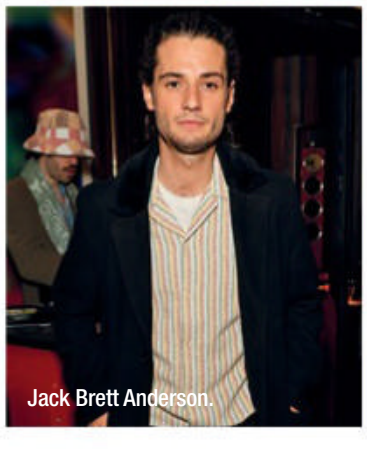
Andrea Valls and Mark Ebulué.

Adrian Smith and guest.


Byron Ross and Daisy Bell.

Lily Sebag-Montefiore and Santa Montefiore.

Jack Whitehall, Johanna Whitehead, Manjit Minhas and Molly Whitehall.


Jack Brett Anderson.

Paul Feig, Manjit Minhas and Ravinder Minhas.

Camden Cox and Sophia Wardman.

Life imitating art, by Paul Feig.

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BOO GEORGE

STRANDED CONTENT

Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe may have been, as the euphemism goes, 'of its time'. But no greater tale has been told of human transformation in rarefied circumstances.

RAKE INCARNATE

by ***scott harper***

It is one of life's exquisite ironies that the story behind a work deemed the first novel in English, a work of the strictest Puritan spiritualism, begins with indecent behaviour on consecrated grounds. We don't know exactly what Alexander Selkirk — a young scallywag born in Fife in 1676 to a shoemaker and tanner — got up to under his or other churchgoers' cassocks that day, but we do know that he failed to appear in an ecclesiastical court and instead went off buccaneering on the high seas with the privateer and explorer William Dampier.

Several tussles with Spanish vessels in the Atlantic later, the ship Selkirk was aboard moored in the uninhabited Juan Fernández Islands, 400 miles from the coast of Chile, to restock. By now, months at sea had cast an acrimonious spell over the shipmates, and Selkirk was concerned about the condition of their battle-and-worm-ravaged vessel. Summoned back to the boat once water and provisions had been stowed, Selkirk stood firm in the shallows. Following what turned out to be a one-man mutiny, the boat eventually left without Selkirk's bedding, musket, navigation tools, tobacco and rum rations, Bible and, crucially, Selkirk himself.

Today, one of the islands in that archipelago is named Robinson Crusoe Island, and it's not difficult to decipher why. If you've never taken in the book by the journalist, pamphleteer, spy and literary wheeler-dealer Daniel Defoe, first published in London in 1719, you won't know that the eponymous hero becomes stranded on a small Caribbean island only after various trading misadventures around Africa, capture and enslavement by a Moorish pirate, escape across the Atlantic on something little bigger than a coracle, and a stint as a plantation owner in Brazil. In Defoe's sequel, he heads off to revisit the island but gets distracted in Asia mocking and dismantling non-Christian religions and profiteering from the sale of opium to the Chinese.

But it's on that island, with only a goatskin umbrella and a parrot he's taught to talk for company, that Crusoe, as a vehicle for Defoe's deft insight into the personal evolution that occurs under the influence of enforced sequestration, comes into his own. As a pondering on the human condition — on the interplay between ambition and self-reliance, grit and imagination; on the fragile nature of what we call civilisation; and on the power of spiritual reflection to instigate personal change — it's up there with Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and the prophetic tomes of Huxley and Orwell. With its lavish exploration of the relationship between uncertainty and isolation, one can only guess how many people reached for it during the Covid lockdowns. Man Friday and his famous footstep in the sand, meanwhile, is one of the great frisson-inducing moments of English literature.

GETTY IMAGES

Yes, there are some nuances to the plot that seem more than a little dicey now. The fact our hero calls the island's natives "savages"; Man Friday's finding literal redemption as an English-speaking Christian; the small matter of slave trading… all of these will have *Daily Mail* reporters praying for a public expression of concern from some dusty liberal academic that they can portray to their readers as a liberal mass book-burning.

Yet it's little wonder the character's exploits are second only to the Bible in terms of number of translations, and that the story has been revisited so much. Thousands of iterations have been produced (it even spawned a genre, the 'Robinsonade', shortly after its publication), including screen spin-offs that have seen the character taken to Mars in 1964 by Paramount Pictures and Technicolor, and to an unspecified Pacific island 36 years later by FedEx, 20th Century Fox and Tom Hanks.

As for the existential wisdom contained within the text, Defoe's tale draws a parallel between the transition from disobedience to obedience and the journey from suffering to God's grace and mercy. A devout Puritan, Defoe went on to survive London's final great plague as well as the city's famous conflagration that killed its rodent couriers before being imprisoned for his religious and political outlook. He died in 1731 not just in penury but in hiding from his creditor.

Our Scottish friend Selkirk, meanwhile, rescued by an English privateer after four years on his palm-fringed hideaway, became a celebrity (and probably a bigamist), but, feeling spiritually bereft despite his wealth, joined a naval warship set for a pirate hunt around Guinea and Africa's Gold Coast. Succumbing to yellow fever during the voyage, he was buried at sea aged 45.

Make of that, in your more God-fearing moments, what you will.

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